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ABSTRACT

This document consists of four consecutive issues of a literary magazine written by adult workplace literacy students of the Casco Bay (Maine) Partnership for Workplace Education. The Partnership was a federally funded workplace literacy program that provided customized basic skills education at seven business sites in the Portland area, serving more than 2,000 employees from 1993-96. Students who contributed to this magazine wrote their own material and focused on their own experiences and accomplishments. Drawings and photographs are also included. (KC)

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ED 426 219

Writers at Work

Fall 1995-Fall 1996

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Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education

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Writers at Work

Fall 1995

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Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education

Foreword

The best way for adults enrolled in workplace education classes to improve their literacy skills is for them to use their own language and write their own material. The emphasis is on writing as a process of musing, discussing, writing and rewriting. Writing becomes a way for each participant to capture and recapture a slice of their lives, articulate their ideas and frame a greater understanding of themselves and their world.

Students in these classes are not writing and reading about a distant place; they are communicating a slice of their life to the other group members. Students are not outside the learning loop; they are the major players. The stories individuals have submitted for publication are testimony to their accomplishments and to the validity of their experiences. The language has become the fabric of their education.

Writers at Work is indebted to all of its authors, who together--even though at different worksites - have created a copious blend of stories. It seems that the publication is becoming widely known and requested by those who happen to leaf through the myriad of stories, wanting very much to find out more. We at the CBP endearingly thank each writer and the teachers who have been instrumental in fostering writing in their classrooms. Together you have helped the publication to grow and become, as project director Nancy Martz claims, "the single most prized product of the Casco Bay Partnership."

It takes heart to tell the truth about our lives and these writers have done so with clarity, carefully chosen thoughts and words, strong convictions and much reflection. Each author brings his/her heart and soul to this publication and proves that writing may be hard work but that it is also magical.

Congratulations!

Linda Evans

One of my greatest joys as Project Coordinator is helping to bring this publication to life. I consider myself extremely fortunate to continue to work alongside Hope - my right-hand editor and multi-talented layout designer with a creative flair - and Chess - our prized photographer who is becoming a familiar face on site as she helps tie the writers to the stories they tell. Thank you for helping to capture and ensure the simple beauty of this fourth booklet of writings.

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Dear Writers at Work,

This month celebrates the sixteenth year of my interview with Toby, an inmate at the Deberry Correctional Institute in Nashville, Tennessee. Toby told me how his teacher, Lee, had taught him to read and write. It seems that Lee had a way to get Toby to talk about growing up in rural Mississippi. Lee listened and wrote down the stories in Toby's own words.

Toby learned to read his words and in doing so, learned to express himself clearly and convincingly. His learning started with life experience. Lee knew he was a natural storyteller because he knew Toby had a past. By acknowledging that past, Lee set Toby's path for real learning.

The stories in the current edition of Writers at Work have been carefully crafted by men and women in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. They represent the likes and dislikes, aspirations and remembrances of adults who have something to say about life and living. The stories are written simply but powerfully. They demand our attention because they have been written from the heart.

For the want of a caring teacher who listened, Toby would have never learned to read and write. Likewise, your stories were hidden from others until you joined the workplace education partnership. Fortunately, your teachers were interested in what you had to say; we owe them a depth of gratitude for listening to you and helping you grow as skilled storytellers.

Henry C. Amoroso, Jr.

Henry C. Amoroso, Jr. is an associate professor of education at the University of Southern Maine. His professional interests include the writing process and the impact of technology on education and society.

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Contents

2 Master Fly-Tier ..... *Donald R. Dyer, Jr.*
4 Spring in Maine ..... *Tu Garland*
4 A Time I got a Horrible Hairdo ..... *Tu Garland*
6 The C&O Canal ..... *Edward Lavigne*
8 The Vietnamese War Changed My Life ..... *Hai Tran*
9 Memories ..... *Doina Serban*
10 My Family ..... *Nur Ayanle Ossoble*
13 Salmon Fishing on Sebago ..... *Robert Hilton*
14 Climbing Over the Gate ..... *Cuc Nguyen*
16 This Was How I Got Married ..... *Mohammad Yaqub*
16 It Was Too Close ..... *Mohammad Yaqub*
19 Standard Orders and Mistakes Sink Titanic ..... *Ted McCorrison*
20 Freeze ..... *Gebru T. Nrayo*
23 Winter Sliding ..... *Kelly Geary Gray*
25 Our Journey to Freedom ..... *Son and Mai Nguyen*
26 Being a Single Mom ..... *Carrie Elliot*
27 My Life Story ..... *Amony Otunnu*
29 I Am An American Citizen ..... *Ruben Dario Lozano*
30 The Scariest Day of My Life ..... *Bac Kim Huynh*
32 Life Story ..... *Marzena Krawczyk*
32 Life Story ..... *Miroslaw Krawczyk*
34 The Place to Be ..... *Roy Blanchard*
35 On the Way to My Second Country ..... *Thanh Nguyen*
36 Maine State Champs ..... *Steve Lawrence*
39 The Thought of Mind ..... *Margueritte Carol*
40 Viet Nam, My Country ..... *Thanh N. Tran*
42 Our First House ..... *Kevin Conant*
44 Cambodia Country ..... *Navy S. Oum*
45 Crystal Vision ..... *Gardi Babine*
46 My True Story ..... *Sophy Som*
49 Tell Me About the Good Old Days, Grandpa ..... *Martha Blake*
50 A Selection of Language Experience Stories ..... *Tann Tem Chork, Kim Lang Cha Tou Senesombath, Ty Nguyen, Nenad Vanovac*

Master Fly-Tier

Donald R. Dyer, Jr.

I remember Bob Bibeau, the owner of Bibeau's fly shop sitting at his fly-tying bench all perked up and going right to business. Bob is a man about five foot eleven and weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, with gray and white hair--very sparse I might add. He is a very happy go lucky man. He loves to talk about new and old fly patterns and about what kind of flies the salmon will be taking on Sebago Lake this year. And of course Bob will show you his new patterns he made this year and Bob loves to see your inventions or creations too.

That reminds me of my creation I tied and took down and showed to Bob. "What is it?" Bob asked me. "It is a quill fly," I told him. "It is supposed to float on top of the water to imitate a dead smelt. I was told the salmon are going crazy over them." Bob took my fly and put it in a glass of water to see if it would float and the damn thing sank like a rock. Bob started laughing. When he caught his breath, Bob said, "You can call this the 'Mayday' fly."

Three of the most successful designs used on Sebago lake are Bob's personal innovations: THE BIBEAU KILLER, BOBBY and ROCHELLE. And Bob has many more to add to these three.

Bob is a very nice person to have as a friend. It hit me hard to hear that he had passed away. Bob was one of Maine's master fly tiers. He didn't think so but a lot of other people did, including myself.

"NOT FORGOTTEN"

Don is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Spring in Maine

Tu Garland

After those long, dark days and freezing cold winter nights, the spring had finally arrived in Maine. It's now April, the weather is not completely warm yet, but the temperature has risen slowly. The average temperature of this month is about 40 - 50 degrees during the day, except for some unexpected cold fronts from somewhere else. The temperature drops considerably at night.

Soon the days will be so warm and filled with sunshine. The sky will be so blue, clear and beautiful. This is the moment I have been waiting for a long time. It's the time for me to be awakened from a long hibernation. It's time for all the activities outdoors: gardening, camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing and best of all, bird watching.

I do not have to go far to find the birds. They come back every year and make their nest on my log cabin. I have many bird feeders around our house. I particularly like the feeder that my husband hung by my kitchen window. I get to observe all types of birds that come to the feeder. I see woodpeckers, goldfinches, rose-chested grosbeaks and evening grosbeaks.

I wish the warmth of spring would last forever, but as you know, Maine's weather is very unpredictable. You can never tell what the weather will be like.

A Time I Got a Horrible Hairdo

Tu Garland

Just the words "horrible hairdo" bring back a lot of memories of myself when I was a little girl...a little elementary student back home in my homeland, Viet Nam.

It was quite a long time ago. I was about 12 years old. It was the year for a student to know only how to go to school, to play and to enjoy life. One day, my best friend, who was only 2 years older than I was, came to me with an idea that would make my life miserable for a few days.

The idea she came up with was that she would give my hair a perm. She had just learned from her parents' beauty shop. I did not think of any consequences at all at that moment. I agreed to let her use me as a guinea pig. The next day I did not go to school as I usually did. My friend came to see me after school and asked me why I did not go to school. I pointed to my hair and we both burst out laughing so hard that tears were pouring down our faces. My hair, my normal looking hair, was not there any longer. Replacing my hair was this tiny, tiny, tight curl that was so tiny that when you combed it, it would not comb out. It didn't look like hair at all. It made me look like an out-of-space person.

As I look back at that time, I remember some great childhood memories.

My name is Tu Garland. I came from Viet Nam 23 years ago. I have lived in Gorham, Maine for 21 years with my husband, Robert, 2 daughters, Trang, and Wanda, my mother, Vung, and my brother, Thanh. About a year and a half ago, I became a grandmother to a beautiful granddaughter, Morgan. I enjoy gardening, growing flowers and bird watching.

The C & O Canal

Edward Lavigne

June 1, 1830 was the day the first boat came down the Cumberland and Oxford Canal. This was the George Washington, a fancy party boat like the passenger boats of the larger Erie Canal. It was filled with officials from the Canal Bank which financed the canal. There was plenty of cheer with a well stocked bar. This was just the beginning of more than 35 years of commerce. Wood, lumber and firewood came down to Portland harbor and furniture, groceries and clothing to the interior of Maine as far inland as Harrison by water, and even further by land.

The original estimated cost was $130,804.89 but actually it cost $206,000. The canal linked a series of bodies of water. It started in Harrison, went down though Long Lake to Brandy Pond, down the Songo, and through its locks into Sebago Lake. Then it went around Fry's Island into Jordan Bay and on to White's Bridge where it picked up the canal again. It ran a short way and then joined the Presumpscott River running down until just before the mills in Westbrook where it ran across country until it reached the Stroudwater at the foot of Clark St., now known as the basin at Thompson's Point.

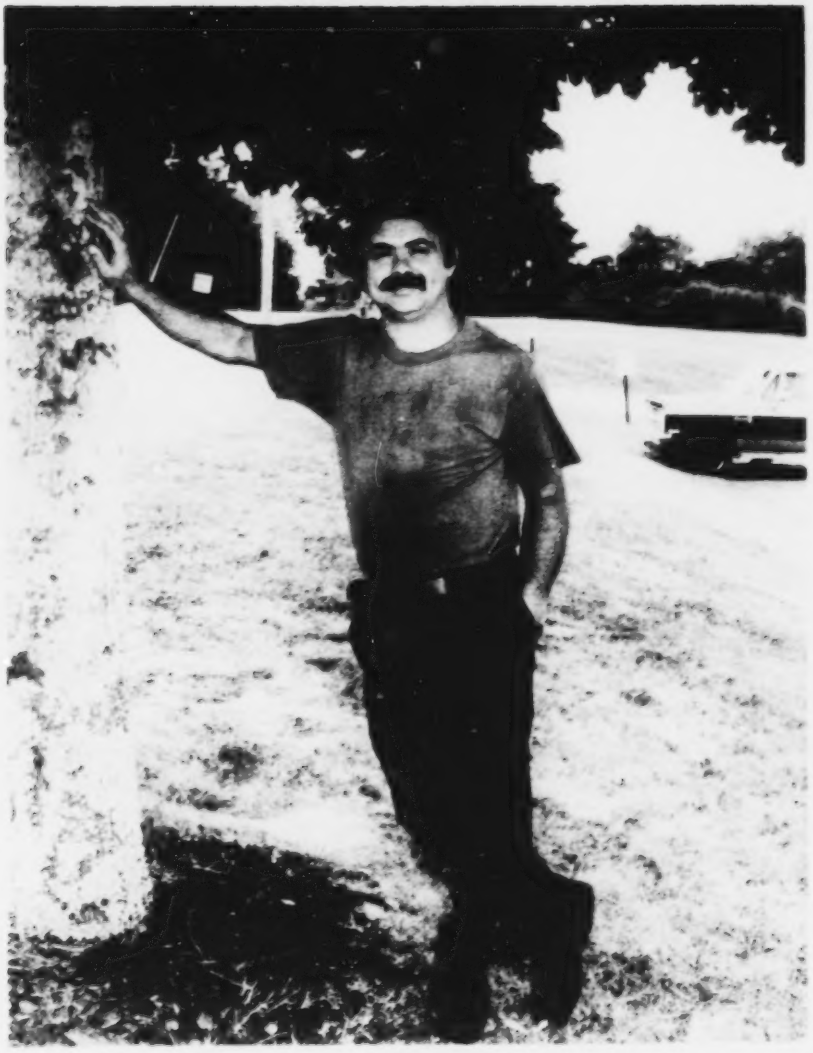
All was not clear sailing. That would be ideal. There were repairs in the locks along with breaks in the berm of the waterway. Sometimes the problems made tempers rise but other times it gave the red-shirted boatman and the towman time to enjoy the finer arts of storytelling, wrestling, boxing and spiritual "refreshments." There are many stories of the canal. One is that a cask lost from one of the boats gave the name to Brandy Pond.

Along with the cargo going up and down the channel there were many businesses that thrived along the canal. The Gambo Falls Powder Mill supplied the Union Army with 1/4 of the powder for the Civil War.

First was the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad for Oxford County in 1850 and then the Portland Ogdensburg Railroad which ran past the foot of Sebago Lake in 1868. These two R.R.'s were the ultimate ruin of the canal. Evidently the owners were trying to dispose of it. They had several prospective buyers but they could not agree on a price. Even though the Portland Water Company had an interest in the canal for its pipeline in 1868, some of the canal officials did not want anything to do with the pipeline.

There are very few parts of the canal that are visible. A lot of people drive by the canal every day and never know that it is there. As time goes on there will be less and less of the canal left. I would like to remember as much as I can of the canal.

I have been a mechanic at the American Tool Co. for the last 12 years. I stay busy with work and my hobbies, taking care of my cows, my horse and lots of other animals.



The Vietnamese War Changed My Life

Hai Tran

In 1975 I was six years old. I was living with my lovely family. Every weekend they took me around Saigon City. I thought Saigon City was the most beautiful city of my country. It had a big zoo, a lot of trees on the street, some beautiful parks and a big theatre. My family was living in Saigon until 1976. In December, 1976, my family moved out of Saigon because in 1975 North Vietnam came to Saigon. We called them the VC. Before 1975 my uncle worked for the USA. When the VC came to Saigon, they wanted whoever worked for the USA. to leave. That's why my family couldn't stay.

In 1976 I came to a small town. That town was not far from Saigon, about eighty miles away. The war was over and our lives were very hard. There was no electricity and it was very difficult to get some work. The town had a lot of VC. They always gave my family a hard time. When I began school, sometimes I had a hard time with my teacher and friends because I'm Amerasian. That's why they didn't like me to stay in class with them. My family began a carpentry business. That was very hard because we worked by hand. We made every kind of furniture inside the house, and I began to do that job when I was fourteen years old. Five years later I did very well, and I opened a business, too. My business did very well, and I didn't come back to Saigon for a long time. When I grew up, I wanted to go back to Saigon, but my family didn't want to go because they didn't want to move again.

In 1988 I returned to Saigon. I was surprised that everything had changed. In 1975 some houses were burned and some buildings were destroyed. When I came back, they had built up again, but bigger than before 1975. I lived in Saigon for a few years, and then I left again. But I didn't move to another small town in my country. I moved far away. I came to America.

I'm Hai Tran. I'm living in Portland, Maine. I have been in the US about four years. Before I lived in Portland I was living in Wichita, Kansas. In Kansas I worked for the Iowa Beef Packing Company. I lived in Kansas almost two years, and then I moved to Maine. Now I'm working at American Tool Company, and I'm living with my mother.

Memories

Doina Serban

At this time I am afraid,
Over here no one's friend;
Another land, a different sky,
Who would say to me just HI!?

Without money who I am?
A hard time it seems to come;
Little meal in plastic bag,
Real reason to be mad.

When my heart is filled with hope,
I can say a little joke:
Hey AMIGO! don't keep running
Anyway the globe is turning

I must resist without doubt,
My desire is not so hot;
I want to know another world,
That one U.S.A. is called.

I wrote this poem about the time when I was making camp in Yugoslavia and I was waiting to come to the U.S.A.

Doina is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

My Family

Nur Ayanle Ossoble

My daughter, Jamila, whom I have not seen for 7 years came to the United States last week from Holland. She came with her three sons. In 1984, I sent Jamila to India to study. She was sixteen years old at that time. After 4 years of studying she married. She and her husband flew to Holland where they have lived for seven years. In April, 1995, Jamila decided to come to the United States to see her family whom she hadn't seen for 7 years. My wife, Anisa, my daughter Deeqa, and my sons, Liban, Abdalla, Ali, Zakariya, Muqtar, Issak and Burhan were very happy to see their sister and her family. Jamila's husband will come over to the United States in one month. Then they will all go back to Holland. They have Netherlands nationality.

We are all happy together. We will have more time to talk about what happened to our country, Africa during the civil war. My son, Liban, said we lost two of our cousins and the wife of Jamila's uncle in the Civil War.

We would be happy if Jamila and her family would stay with us. Unfortunately, they cannot because they have Netherlands nationality. They must go back to their country. Hopefully, we will see them again in two or three years.

My name is Nur Ayanle Ossoble. I speak Italian, Swahili, Somali, and English. English is my fourth language. I am from Africa. I like the United States of America. I live in Portland, Maine with my wife, Anisa, my daughter Deeqa and my sons, Liban, Abdalla, Ali, Zakariya, Muqtar, Issak and Burhan. We are all happy to stay here in Maine. I have worked at American Tool Company for one year. I am in the reading/writing workshop provided by the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. I like my work at American Tool Company and I would like to continue.

Salmon Fishing on Sebago

Robert Hilton

Fishing for salmon on the big lake is not what it used to be. When I first started fishing for salmon in 1980 with my father-in-law we would fish all day and have a great time catching fish. Now when you go to Sebago to fish for salmon you will have better luck fishing for togue.

Moose, my father-in-law, gave me my first fly rod and reel; he loved to fish and we started out like best of friends. Moose is his nick name for he is a big man but also genial. I am thankful that I have a father- in-law that I can do things with like fish and hunt.

We would get to the lake early in the morning, and as we are launching our boat into the water you could hear the cry of the loon on the lake. Sometimes we would have to wait for the fog to lift before we could head out to go fishing.

I tie my own salmon fly so it seems more enjoyable to me when I catch fish. One of my favorite flies is what I call Robbie Smelt. It is tied on a tandem hook with a silver body and blue bucktail over white bucktail.

Fishing can be one of the best times of your life, if you look at it as a way to get away from all of the hustle and bustle of life. Spending time out on the lake fishing and enjoying what God has created for us to have, that's what fishing has meant to me.

I've worked at American Tool for 12 years and have worked in the manufacturing dept. for one year. I enjoy fishing, hunting and spending time with my family.

Climbing Over the Gate

Cuc Nguyen

There was a High School, which was on my way to Grammar School. For nine years I went by it everyday. It was my last year in Grammar School. We all were dreaming to "climb over the gate to get to High School." We used to say that the High School gate is getting taller to us to climb over. Because we had to pass two selecting tests which picked only one out of five elementary students. I had been studying hard at school, going to help course after class, staying up every night. Finally my hard work paid off. Yes! I was walking on air.

The following fall, we the freshest students, anxiously, proudly, took our first steps in the new school. From now on we had to wear white shirts or blouses every day. Little by little, it had become my second home. I always found warmth, joyousness and commitment. That time is one of the best times of my life even though I left High School years ago and I'm now in America. If I've ever remembered a place striking my heart, that's my school, my High School.

It's just like yesterday. There's the main gate. On the right side was the garage for staff. On the left side was the student's garage and canteen. I never will forget, where in a sweltering afternoon, a glass of cold ice tea freshened my throat better than any soft drink I've ever had. But most of the time I didn't come to the canteen buying foods because I wanted to save my money (which my Mom gave me for things to eat.)

A gym was behind the student's garage. We built a stage and it was for the annual celebrations. I remember seeing affectionate rays in our teachers' eyes on Teacher Honor Day. We contributed our money to buy a present, we volunteered to help decorate the stage and organize the ceremony. We did that just to remind them every year that they have been the special ones owned our honors and our respect now and still, forever. Usually the presents weren't big but the meaning was countless that commitment wouldn't make most of the teachers resign their jobs because of poor rates. We've learned how important we were to each other.

Going straight from the gate were classroom and administrative office and teachers' lounge. The building was structured around a square. In the middle was a flag pole. Every beginning of class at the square, we had to stand in line before going to class, and sang the national anthem every Monday. The school is a three staged building. I liked the white and blue painted in the classroom. We had lots of sun light and fresh air. The blackboard and desk were placed similarly as the classroom in the U.S. But two of us shared the same desk and we became friends. We girls always liked to

hide some sour fruit in our drawer, eating and chuckling. The desk was long enough for two and I used to lay my elbow against it, holding my chin to congest our lesson or hiding my face to avoid the teacher appointing me to repeat a lesson when we had some other visitors.

Right at the door was a balcony. I sometimes laid my notebook on it to mutter the lesson. In the last year in H.S., I used to stand at the balcony looking at the sky praying God and worried about one day my mom had to close the coffee shop and I would lose my only one supporter. There was windy afternoon when I made a little flower and enjoy to watch it flying in the air.

Time went by. In four years, most of the morning I never had breakfast. I didn't tell any of my friends because I didn't want to have their pity. However, there was also some students that were suffering my problem. We were doing well. We know that and never felt any regret. On the International Lady Day, I was elected to be one of the five misses of the class for our best attitude and achievement. I graduated in 1988-1989. And I wanted to go for four year college to be a teacher. In my time, a non-communist union member was discriminated against when getting into college. I wasn't a union communist member because I was a Catholic. I wanted to be an English teacher. Before I went for the test my teacher warned me that I wouldn't be accepted. But I decided to try and get the required score. (I had my friend's mom who could find out about my score.) I waited and didn't have any news from school. And the difficult condition came to me--I couldn't continue schooling whether or not I passed. I had no support in four years in college. There was nothing I could do.

The High School gate was now closed in me. I've felt that the gate has been taller and taller because I couldn't learn as much as what my teacher want to get across "life and academic knowledge." And I've felt that I always owed them for the good characteristics I possess. Persisting to school is still my inspiring wish. I've told myself to try my best. Now I'm in America. I know and hope that nobody is being judged by her religion or anything but her real self. Daily I like to look at the children going to school, that always makes me young even if a thousand more years pass by.

Cuc works at Barber Foods. She wants to continue her education and maybe go to college some day.

This Was How I Got Married

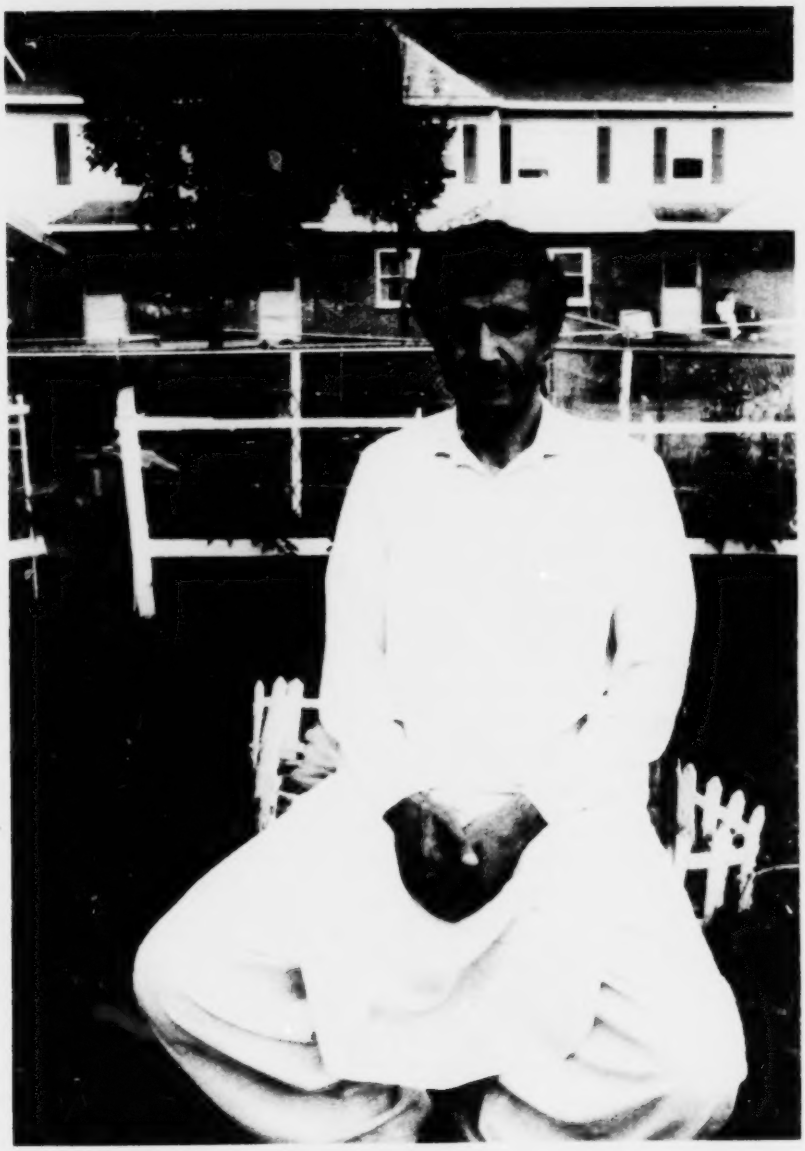
Mohammad Yaqub

I was approaching the age that I had to get married. Getting married in my country is not an easy decision to make. The reason is men and women are not allowed to see each other. They can't talk. Most of the time they don't even know each other. This makes the decision more difficult. I had to get married like everyone else does. The way you get married in my country is that your mother or sister or both go to see the girl and choose her for you. That is what my mother and sister did. They chose a girl who was 10 years younger than me. At first, I was so afraid with excitement. I tried many ways to see her face or at least get her picture, but no way worked. Eventually, the night of the marriage arrived. I couldn't concentrate on what was going on around me because I was concerned about my bride. Finally the time arrived. I was alone with my bride. I lifted up the veil she was wearing. I looked at her. She was extremely beautiful. We have been married and living together ever since and it has been more than 15 years. We are still very happy.

It Was Too Close

Mohammad Yaqub

I was going to die. It was the middle of 1987 when I had a trailer truck loaded with trade goods. We were driving from Kabul, the capital of my country, to Kandahar, the city I lived in. It was almost noontime when two Russian helicopters appeared in the sky and we knew what was going to happen. My driver stopped the truck and we all hurried to the bushes around us. In just a second the first shell missed but the second shell hit the truck and set it on fire. The Russians launched several more shells to the bushes around us and fired a thousand rounds of bullets and left. None of our caravan were hurt, but we were scared to death because we could have been killed by the Russians.



I am Mohammad Yaqub. I moved to the United States of America from Afghanistan about 30 months ago. I live in Portland, Maine with my wife and four sons. I work at American Tool Company. Recently, I joined the reading/writing workshop, which is provided by the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education Program.

My name is Ted McCorrison. I have worked for American Tool Company for 15 years. My interests are the sea, fishing, old ships, and building model boats from scratch. I have been married for almost 26 years and have two boys and one girl.

Standard Orders and Mistakes Sink Titanic

Ted McCorrison

When the Titanic left England she had a fire in #5 forward coal bunker. I think this had a lot to do with her sinking. They said the fire was out of control but it was confined.

As far as I know, compartments three through six had been holed (cut into). I think that the heat weakened the plates in the #5 area and caused her to take on more water than anticipated. They said it was caused just by the iceberg.

When she hit the iceberg at 11:40 PM, it cut a hole in her about 150 feet long. The officer of the deck ordered all stop, closed all watertight doors, and cut the helm hard to starboard (right). That's a standard order. They said the bow swung *to port*. With forward way still on and the rudder at hard starboard, the bow would go *to starboard*, and the iceberg would be forced ever deeper into the starboard quarter. (Note box for some times during this event.)

I think that the hull plates and rivets were so weakened by the heat that the cold water from hitting the iceberg opened a larger hole in the #5 bunker than would be expected. She took on more water than she would have from just hitting the iceberg. I believe that hot steel and cold water caused the plates on the hull of the Titanic to fail.

Events Leading to Sinking of the Titanic

7:30pm	Another message about icebergs. The captain was never told.
9:20pm	Captain retires for the night.
9:40pm	Another message received about icebergs about 78 miles ahead.
11:40pm	Hit iceberg. Engine room ordered all stop, then reverse, closed watertight doors and cut helm to starboard.
12:55pm	Down by the bow.
1:30am	Bow down and listing heavily to port.
1:40am	Last signal rocket fired.
1:45am	Engine room full up to boilers.
2:05am	Forward well deck deeply awash.
2:18am	On her way to her final resting place.

Freeze

Gebru T. Nrayo

In the middle of the night I escaped from the evil government with two friends. We were prisoners in minimum security. One day the security crew leader he opened our room and said, "Hey!! Listen up! You guys! Tomorrow you'll be going to change to central maximum security," he said and closed the room.

Three of us, we were quiet for a while because we were terrified. We knew we would be tortured and shot to death. We all planned to escape, but how? We talked with each other for awhile. One thing came in mind, do we have money? They said yes we did, and I collect the money from the others. We knocked on the door of our room. The security guard he came and said, "What's up?" Three of us we pretend how much we love them and want to have a party for them. The guard agreed and we give him the money for the party. In the evening we had permission for the party. Time to sing and dance in the small room. We make noise, sing song. Secretly we broke the window of the door. No one could hear because of the noise. Around 11 pm the guards ordered keep quiet.

In the middle of the night, best we can, we sneak and escaped out of the compound. We quickly got out of the city. We went in the deep of the forest. We were very frightened because of the danger of wild animals, especially constrictors (big snake). Our traveling was at night time and we slept during the day. We traveled without food and water after days we crossed over the border into the neighboring country.

As soon as we crossed the border we heard, "Freeze." It was another dangerous maybe fatal situation. There were fundamental religious people surrounding us. They were very frightening. They had sophisticated weapons, machine guns, bombs, big rifles, and one had the biggest sword to cut off our necks. Immediately two of us started talking, saying that we were the same as them, again and again. One friend, he pretended he was deaf because he could not speak their language. We tricked them. We pretended we were thirsty for their religious flag, that we needed to hold it. We said we came for religious freedom. They were pointing their guns, ready to cut and shoot off our necks, but because of what we told them they turned away. We fooled them. They said we were lucky, that they killed many people for religion, for god, in that season. Many children and adults were sacrificed so they would go to heaven but the victims, they died and would go down to hell. Then they gave us some food and water and sent us to the government and the government gave us over to the United Nations.

I have not enough words to thank God for satisfying my soul for being reunited with my own kid.

My name is Kelly Geary Gray and I am a 28-year-old that has been born and raised in the Greater Portland area. I recently married and we are in the process of looking for our first home. I have worked at Hannaford Bros. Co. for about seven years now and enjoy every minute of the fast paced corporate world. I enjoy being with family and friends and anything that involves outside activities.

Winter Sliding

Kelly Geary Gray

Winter sliding has changed a lot since the days I remember in my youth. I used to slide all day long, whether it was cold or I was soaked to the bone. I loved it! Now that I am older, and a little out of shape, sliding is not what I thought it would be.

I wanted to take my niece sliding so she could really have some fun, (well, actually both of us). Caitlin had fun all right but Aunti Kelly thought she was going to die. I remember... losing your belly, screaming all the way down and loving the fresh air. After about four times of this, climbing that hill was out of the question. Caitlin would say, "One more time Auntie Kelly." Of course she is spoiled and I cannot say no to this child.

I was actually looking for a way out: "Maybe Uncle Chris can go down with you this time Caitlin." This worked! I was able to take a break. I believe Uncle Chris was feeling the same way I was eventually. All I know is, it was my turn again very soon.

Luckily, two other children came along and Caitlin made new friends. Those three monkeys must have made 20 sliding adventures. It was wonderful to see their faces, to see me sliding through their eyes. I wish I had the energy from back in my youth (like those kids that just kept climbing that hill for another turn). The next day my sister called me and said Caitlin had slept until 9:00 a.m. She is usually up at six or seven, so I guess all that sliding had tired her just a little too!

Son and Mai are working at American Tool Company. They are students in the reading/writing workshop provided by the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Our Journey to Freedom

Son and Mai Nguyen

One evening I was looking through the window. The sky turned dark after sunset. Only a few street lights were on. It reminded me of the night I was trying to escape from the border of Hungary.

It was 8:00 p.m. November 24, 1990. My husband and I walked from the border of Hungary to Austria. We had seen the map before we took our journey. We knew it was about ten miles, across a field and a forest, from Hungary to Austria. The weather was very cold, foggy and the sky was dark with a few stars. The soil was very wet and the landscape was quiet. We didn't take any ID cards or passports with us because we knew that was illegal and dangerous. If the border patrol soldiers arrested us, we would have had to go to prison or we would have been deported to Viet Nam. Also, they might have thought we were spies and they might have shot us before we had a chance to explain why we were there. As a result of fear and possible death, we didn't know what to do. We just prayed to God and hoped that He would give us courage to get through all this.

We had walked almost four hours across the field. We were tired. We sat down near a bush and rested. Unexpectedly, we heard some voices and the sound of feet on our left side. We saw two border patrol soldiers approaching us. They were smoking and talking just about 80 feet from us. We were scared. We just gripped each others hands in fear and sat very quietly, as if we were models for a painter. The closer they came to us, the more we trembled because we had never hidden like that. They were the hunters in a forest, and we were the animals of prey. Suddenly, they stopped walking. They were about 24 feet from us and I could smell the smoke of their cigarettes in the air. They stayed about ten minutes and then turned back. We took deep breaths slowly and felt relief after that. We continued with only four miles left to Austria. Sometimes, the outpost patrol tower turned on flood lights. We waited for the light to pass and walked after it became dark. We came to Austria's border at 2:00 a.m. It was six hours of being nervous and scared to death.

When we lived in Viet Nam, we wished that we could go to the United States to live in freedom. My brother left our country for the United States after the fighting of Southern and Northern Viet Nam ended in 1975. He became a sponsor for our family to come to the United States. It was hard because our country is Communist now. Members of our family were soldiers of the Viet Nam Republic before 1975. Finally my husband and I chose to travel to Hungary because of the contract agreement between the government of Viet Nam and Hungary. If people agreed to work for four years for one of Hungary's companies, they were allowed to return to their country. The contract agreement specified that no one was allowed to leave the country.

My husband and I had a very strong desire for freedom. We were determined to walk through the border from Hungary to Austria. We started our new life after my brother applied as sponsor for us to come to America.

Being a Single Mom

Carrie Elliot

My name is Carrie Elliot and I am twenty-eight years old and the mother of one daughter. Shayne Lynne is nine years old, in the third grade, and quite mature for her age. For the past two years I've raised Shayne and worked a full time job. This is my story:

When I first divorced, I moved back home to my Dad's. I was hired at American Tool Co. right away. Shayne and I lived with my father and brother, Shane, for a little more than eighteen months.

Then, in February, we came across a terrific deal on a rent. So, Shayne and I discussed our situation, we decided that we could do it together. We figured out our income and budget. Child support comes, but not often, so we've learned not to depend on it. Shayne understands, now that we pay rent, McDonald's is a rarity. Sometimes I'll pick up a cleaning job to provide a little extra. Baby-sitters are never a problem. Shayne has a lot of family that jump at the opportunity to sit for me. Instead of cash we pay with returned favors. During work hours Shayne is in school. In the summer we will juggle a schedule between her Uncle Shane and Aunt Jojo. It can be difficult and confusing, but it is free of worries and cash.

My daughter is pretty smart and understands a lot about life that maybe other nine year olds haven't had the opportunity to experience. After work I'll pick up Shayne Lynne at her Grandpa's and do any errands that are needed. This time could be spent banking, shopping, visiting friends, etc. We usually discuss her while on the road. After we arrive at home, there could be three hours or a half hour left to our day. Homework is supposed to be finished at Grandpa's, but if not it will be done now. Sally, our puppy, demands a lot of attention also, so we'll play with her for a bit. A lot of the time we can be found on our couches, resting, vegging, and zoning, or WHATEVER!

After our busy sixty hour week, Saturday is looked upon seriously. Shayne is at Mimi's or Dad's and I am out. Dancing is the normal routine. I like to refer to it as VENTING! A week's worth of built up stress, tension, frustration, and aggravation need to be vented in a positive way. I found dancing is an unbelievable medicine and also wonderful exercise.

I believe that all the madness is actually a self-esteem must. I much prefer working over welfare, and single over unhappily married. There is a great deal of pride in our home. When our day starts at four a.m. and it's seven p.m., dinner isn't cooked, I'm not showered, and I've just stepped into the puddle that Sally left, I might forget being proud. But once I'm showered, dinner dishes are washed and Sally is on her runner, I'll remember.

Single working Mom is the correct term I suppose, but Shayne deserves her credit, too. She is a very good girl and does her best at

helping out. Her chores include cleaning her room, sorting laundry, feeding Sally. She even knows how to screen calls. She does well in school, we are switching schools in the fourth grade which will add two hours to our day. We are hoping that'll make life a little less hectic.

Humor is a must in our home. Without it we'd go BONKERS! Shayne Lynne has developed a wonderful sense of humor. There is a new baby in her family. Since Raven's arrival, Shayne has decided that we need another baby. So much so, that she is willing to share her room. My eyes with disbelief, I asked, "Well, what about a father or husband?" Her reply was quite frank, "We don't need no husband!" My feeling behind it all is if I can do it then anyone can.

I do feel very grateful for our family and friends and everything else in our lives. Even though I'm doing it alone, I'm really not. Their love and support play just as big a part as my job and home. I find I'm tired a lot or may not have an extra twenty dollars to buy a surprise gift for Shayne, or even myself, but it is all worth it. My daughter has the best of everything. Friends, family, toys and experience. She's watched me work, play, laugh and cry to keep it all together. When it's her turn, she'll excel, I'm sure!

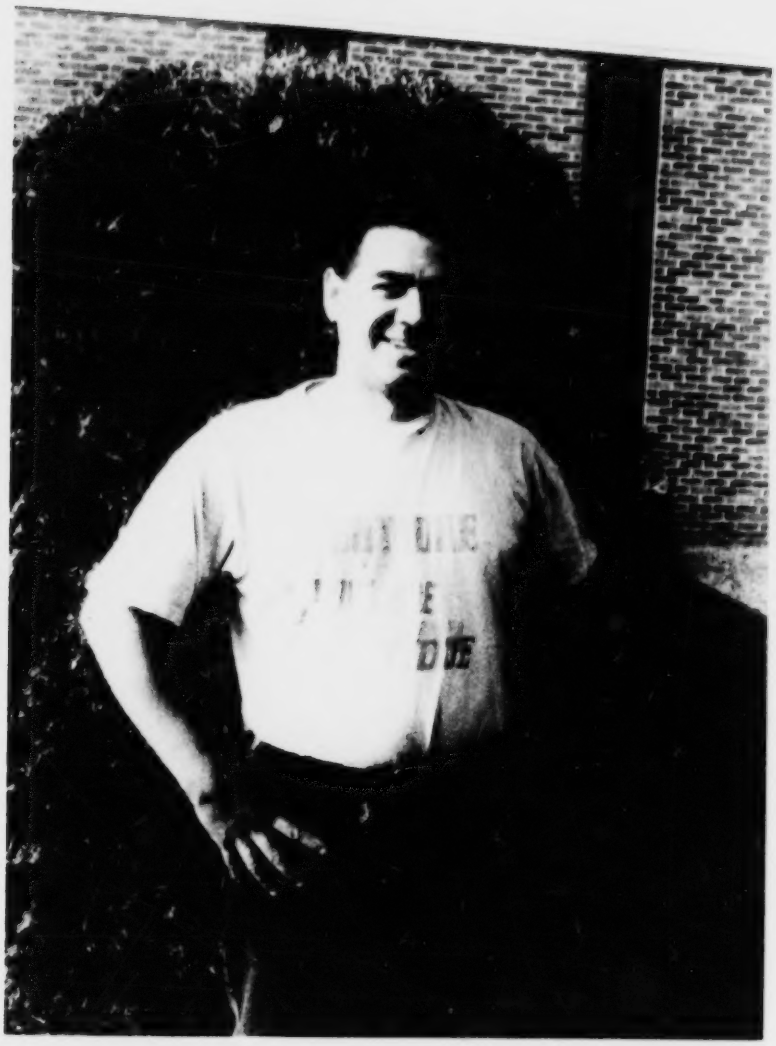
My Life Story

Amony Otunnu

My name is Amony Sabina Otunnu. I am from Africa. I was born in Gulu, Uganda. There were six children in my family and now there are only three. The other three died fighting for our country. My father died when I was only six years old. I remember I was little and we had a party, a Christmas party and friends and family and neighbors came together and I had a good day in my country.

When my father died we had no more good parties like that. My father was a policeman. I miss my family.

Amony is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.



I Am An American Citizen

Ruben Dario Lozano

For many years, I had a dream to become an American citizen and today my dream came true. I waited five long years to have my dream come true. To get all the information about how to become an American Citizen, I went to the Portland Immigration office. They gave me all the information I needed and showed me how to apply for my citizenship. I needed to live in the United States of America for five years in order to apply for my citizenship. The Immigration officer gave me a list of books which I had to study to learn about the United States Government and History. I also filled out an application. I had lived in the United Stated for 5 years and I was eligible for my examination test. I was so nervous. I passed the test. I am an American Citizen. I am eligible to vote and to work for the government any time if I have the opportunity. I'm also planning to bring my parents to the USA. I want to bring them from Colombia, South America to live with me.

Ruben Dario Lozano is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. He works at American Tool. He is in the reading/writing workshop.

The Scariest Day of My Life

Bac Kim Huynh

It was September, 1974 when I first came to America. It was very scary for me because when I got out of the airplane, everything was new. My two sons and I were cold and scared. Actually, I was the one who was scared the most. I felt like going back to my own country because I could not speak much English. I was in the Philadelphia airport, about 7:00 a.m. The weather was very cold. I didn't know it would be cold so we did not have any warm clothes. I thought my husband was going to be there to pick us up but somehow he missed us. He was there earlier but our plane hadn't come in so he left. He asked at the airport what time our plane was coming in. They told him we were not going to arrive until 9:00 a.m.

My husband came back to America eight months before we arrived. That was why I was so nervous and scared. I was alone with two babies and could not speak much English. I worried all the time. I was really scared when my babies and I arrived at the airport and my husband was not there. I thought I was lost or we had boarded the wrong plane. At the time, I wished I had another ticket because I would have gone back to my own country. I felt so sad and disappointed. As I stood there, I looked around and I didn't know what to do. Somehow, I remembered that my husband had given me a telephone number to call if I got lost or didn't know where we were. I called by giving the number to a person who just walked by. I asked him to call the number for me and he did. He called and talked to my mother-in-law. She told the man to keep me there while she found my husband to tell him to go back to the airport to pick us up. The very nice man did what my mother-in-law asked. The man told me to stay there and wait for my husband to come and pick us up. That was the scariest and saddest day of my life.

My name is Bac Kim. I came from Viet Nam. I have four children. My oldest son's name is Thomas, my second son's name is Edward, my daughter's name is Mary and my youngest son is Brian. My special granddaughter's name is Jessica. I live in Westbrook. I have lived in Maine for 20 years.

Life Story

Marzena Krawczyk

My name is Marzena Krawczyk. I was born May 4, 1969 in Chmielnik, Poland. I have two brothers. My brothers names are Miroslaw and Andrsej. My brothers' are unmarried.

I have a mother. She lives in Poland. My father is dead.

I have been married seven years. My husband's name is Miroslaw. We have two daughters. Our daughter's names are Agata and Ewelina. They both go to kindergarten.

I am beginning a new life in America. I like life in America.

Life Story

Miroslaw Krawczyk

My name is Miroslaw Krawczyk. I was born August 23, 1959, in Chmielnik, Poland. I have one sister. Her name is Halina. I have a mother and a father. My mother lives in Poland. My father lives in America.

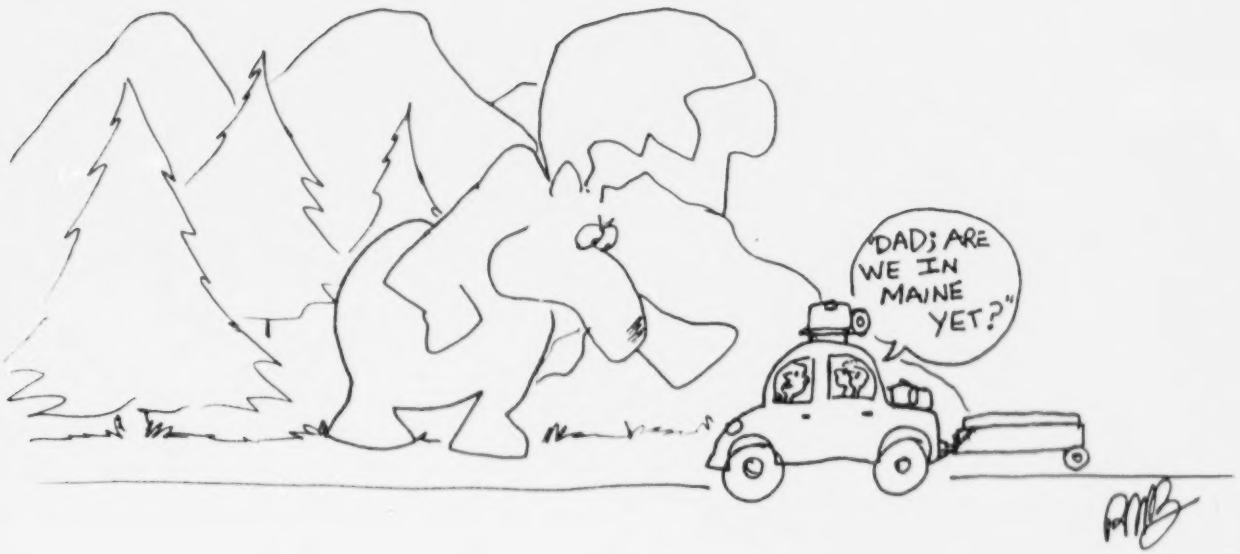
I am married. My wife's name is Marzena. We have two daughters. Our first daughter Agata is six years old and our second daughter Ewelina is five years old.

I have lived in Poland for 35 years. I have lived in America nine months.

In Poland I went to high school. I have many friends in Poland. In Portland, I have two friends. We sometimes play basketball. I like to play soccer, and I like fishing. In Poland my soccer team was "Zenit - Chmiellnik."

My wife and I work at Barber Foods. My family has begun our new life in America. Maybe it will be good.

Marzena and Miroslaw are students in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.



The Place to Be

Roy Blanchard

Hi, my name is Roy Blanchard. I've lived in Maine my entire adult life. As a kid I traveled and lived in Texas, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts because my Dad was in the Air Force.

Maine holds a lot of creative surroundings. That's why we moved here in 1969.

I've got a lovely wife and an independent and artistic daughter.

I became interested in cartooning in 1971 and have doodled my ideas on paper ever since. A lot of my ideas come from personal experiences and issues in Maine and elsewhere.

Roy is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

On the Way to My Second Country

Thanh Nguygen

My second country's first place was Maine. I have been in the US for 3 years and 2 months. I moved to some states. I like to travel around the US country. I enjoy to see how big, beautiful, safe, wealthy, free it is in the US. The cities are so resplendent in the night time with the colored lights and high buildings, but nowhere like Maine, quiet, beautiful landscape, especially because my family lives here. Before I arrived in the US, I stopped in the Philippines's camp for 6 months to learn English and the culture of America. There were terrible things I couldn't forget, sometimes they follow me in my dreams many times. In the morning June 15, 1991 there was a volcano eruption, the sun didn't rise. The dust fell down and was like rain, the sky got dark and the earth moved too. The power was lost and we used the candles. The situation was like "Doomsday" came. Time went slowly, thousands of people were nervous and only prayed for safety. I cried too much and talked with myself, "I don't want to die early, when I'm so young." I prayed to the Lord to protect everyone for safety. I have strong feelings to believe in the Lord. "Keep praying and hoping," these things I always do. Next day the sun rose, the dust stopped falling. We didn't have clean water to use for a week. I almost walked for 2 hours to the stream to fetch and carry water. The first time in my life I eyewitnessed the country. Crops were destroyed by the volcanic eruption. I really felt sorrowful for the Philippines. The people in the camp told me when they left Vietnam by boat, it was so dangerous many people died on the ocean, humans ate humans when food ran out. They didn't have a choice. When my six months were all done, I was so happy. But thousands of people still live in refugee camps. They really need help from IOM (International Organization Migration) to make legal documents to come to the US. Their countries were attacked. The communists aren't good leaders. Their life is without freedom, poverty is in the countries. These are causes to run away from their native countries. Now I live in safety, in freedom, but I don't forget to pray for them for safety and to settle in the US.

My name is Thanh. I hope in the future my English will be fluent. I hope I'll pass the examination for the driver's license. I like to walk on my day off. I love to see the sunset on the ocean.

Maine State Champs

Steve Lawrence

Mikey C. stepped out of the limousine. The season was over, and considering the great season he had it was fitting that he was wearing a John Wayne style cowboy hat. Being eleven years old it was also no surprise that he had a lollipop in his mouth.

The phone rang at ten o'clock. My wife and I were in bed with Stevie in between us. Stevie pulled the cover over his head. Coach Carmody wanted to talk to him, Stevie was a wreck. "Hello," he said, "Yup, okay thank you goodbye. Yes!"

The Casco Bay squirt "A" travel team tapped out the song "Let's Go" with their sticks before every game. It was an appropriate team song for them, because they played teams from as far away as New Jersey and New York.

Our first game of the season was against Billerica, Mass. Our team parents hollered hey, hey, Casco Bay at the drop of the puck.

The game was close for the first two periods. In the third period our team came together and they would play basically the same way all year, "they were slow starters."

Billerica is a big hockey town and we beat them 5-3, we were excited but four games later we would meet our match.

We started slow against Lewiston and we couldn't catch up, we lost 6-5. Like us, Lewiston passed the puck well, actually they did everything well, our goaltenders were not as experienced as theirs. We had 29 shots on goal, most of them in the last eight minutes, Lewiston had a total of 13 on us. Most of our team had been together since the summer before when they played 20 games in Augusta. Their summer record was 19-1. When Lewiston beat us we all walked out of the ice arena with a dull and unfamiliar look about us. But that feeling would be with us again in Rhode Island. The kids would learn the feeling of loss.

We traveled to Providence for a weekend tournament and lost four straight games. It was a learning experience for our players. We lost 9-0 in our last game to the New Jersey Rockets. These kids were recruited for the team from the greater New York City area.

At the Holiday Inn our kids were at their party animal best. Mikey's bathing suit was ripped off him and thrown up on the skylight by his brother. Adults coming there to dance in the lounge heard what they thought was gunfire, but it was only our kids busting balloons in the lobby.

And the cannon ball contest in the pool drained the water level by a foot.

One girl sitting in the hot tub got so excited that she threw up in it, so they shut it down.

One of our pee wee players peed on the rocks in the sauna.

But they invited us back three months later.

My name is Steve Lawrence. I have been employed by Hannaford Bros. Co. for 17 years. All of my off work time is spent doing things with my family. This story/ journal is about my son's past year in hockey.

In the first six weeks of the new year the team played fourteen games without a loss. Lewiston brought us back to earth beating us 5-0. This loss woke our kids up.

Our rematch in Rhode Island proved that our team could play the best and beat them. The kids and the parents were united. A man from Rhode Island asked me where Casco Bay was. I had been expecting that, but by the end of the weekend, the teams from Warwick, Nassau County New York, the North Shore Massachusetts area and Providence would know because we beat them all. We lost the championship game to Cranston, but we had played four games in two days compared to their one game. They beat us with fresh legs.

The highlight of the weekend was the win against the number one team from Massachusetts.

The kids had a good time at the Holiday Inn, but they were pretty quiet.

A boy from Bristol, Connecticut had a mouthful of pool water squirted in his face by Danny Carmody when he tried to pick a fight with Stevie, that cooled him off. Stevie saw billboards everywhere in Providence and they were on his mind constantly, what's Powerball, Seagrams, you name it, he wanted to know what they were selling. But mostly the kids were beginning to focus on the state title games coming up a week later.

There were four teams in the state finals, but Lewiston was the only team that worried us. They had beat us in 2 out of 3 games in the regular season. We got through the first three games without a loss. Waterville tied us though with a controversial last second goal.

Our team's great desire of the season was to win the state title. Lewiston could not match Casco Bay's desire to win it. Even the parents could hardly contain themselves in the Lewiston Armory. Casco Bay's never quit attitude beat Lewiston in the third period to win the state title 5-3.

One week later Casco Bay went to play one last time in Providence for the New England Title. Our team's attitude was to go and just have some fun. We would not win the New England Championship but we beat the Rhode Island State Champs, good ole Cranston 5-3.

Lewiston invited us to play in the last tournament of the season. Lewiston fell easily to us 6-2. We played Middlesex, Massachusetts, for the tourney title beating them easily 5-1. During this game the Lewiston coach took a lot of mental notes about our team, I was standing beside him. He thought we had a great team.

Mikey Carmody was the captain of the team and as he led his team out of the ice arena and into the sunlight, they saw the longest Limousine they had ever seen.

The Thought of Mind

Margueritte Carol

Yesterday is far to remember and gone history in the human mind. Tomorrow we'll daydream and hope for the future in our own special ways. But today is the day we confront our differences in our own life's aspects. I see myself a while ago when I could mumble in confusion not knowing what was right from wrong.

Having been confined with my own mentality I now realize how much it takes for one to care and show concern for others through the so many aspects of communication we have gone through in the course of this study.

At first I had a low profile on whether I should continue with the course or not, but the spirit of the whole team encouraged my low esteem to come up to the point of accepting me as person amongst the rest to participate to the most of my ability.

This was quite a challenge for me, and your considerable help and showing tremendous concern when I needed it most was unthinkable. All I could say is if wishes were horses then beggars could ride. You made me feel comfortable to be a part of you and the whole team.

All these brings me up to the point that I recall a little far back when:

Mama told me to say "Aaah"
But never explained how it felt,
She told me to close my eyes to get some sleep, yet never told me what came out of it.
Papa told me never to look up straight into his eyes cause I was getting impolite and rude.

Fascinating enough, all these are the basics of effective communication. You need to touch, feel and show concern, yet you try as hard to get as much attention from both sides as you could to keep life going. We learn through mistakes and our own experiences whether good or bad unless you're born a genius. Life is consistent of the ups and downs. The only thing that I think about most is Mama told me never to give up on myself and education.

Margueritte is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Viet Nam, My Country

Thanh N. Tran

My country is a beautiful nation with over 60 million people. It is located in Southeast Asia, and it has a long coastline with an S shape.

The climate in my country is different in northern and southern parts. In the northern part there are four seasons but it's not cold enough in winter to have snow. In the southern part there are only two seasons, the dry season and the rainy season.

Before 1975, my country was divided into two parts. The Northern Viet Nam belonged to communists and the Southern belonged to the Republic of Viet Nam. When the communists took over the south in 1975, many Vietnamese had to leave their country. Some people fled by boats, others escaped by crossing the border to enter neighbor countries as refugees. Many of them have lost their lives or suffered injuries on the way of running away. A lot of people are lucky to survive and have a better life in the United States.

I lived in South Viet Nam, the capital was named Saigon. When I was a little girl, I was born in Chau Doc, this was my native town. It was far from Saigon. Chau Doc has many mountains and rice fields but sometimes my city was flooded with water and water destroyed the crops. When I was 21 years old I moved to Saigon and lived there until 1990; my sister in law sponsored my family to come to the US. I love my native town in Viet Nam so much.

Thanh is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Our First House

Kevin Conant

My wife and I were looking for a house for two or three years. We would save up some money, then we had to use that for car repairs or some large expense.

We stayed with my parents at the time, trying to save some money for a house. An ad in the newspaper caught our eye, it was about an open house in Buxton. The minute we walked through the door we knew we wanted this house. The house is located near Route 22 and the Old Portland Road.

The house has three bedrooms, a one car garage and has about an acre of land. Of all the houses we looked at, either the husband passed away or the wife passed away, this time the husband died and the widow could not afford the mortgage so she was selling.

From the day my wife and I walked through the door to the day of the closing was about four months. November 23, 1993 was the big moving day. My wife and I had plenty of help to move all of our furniture. It was hard to believe that this is our home.

That following spring we tried to grow a garden. It was more work than I thought. I suppose nothing comes easy, but when it does it is either wrong or you have done it before.

Our house had a problem with fleas that summer, my dog and I were bitten very bad. So we had to call an exterminator to get rid of the pests. He killed just about every insect in the house, even the fleas.

That winter we decided to do some home improvements, such as vinyl replacement windows and vinyl siding. The contractor we hired to do the job took about four months to complete it, between working around the rain and the snow.

A few things I don't like about owning a house, are salesmen trying to sell me things I am not interested in. And people turning around in my driveway. I live near a lousy intersection. People are constantly turning around or asking for directions to get somewhere.

My wife and I were introduced to the man who built our house. He lives up the street about a mile. I enjoyed listening to the stories he told about our home. Like the time it had rained very hard and the basement flooded. He said "Everything downstairs is floating in at least two to three feet of water." The old man told me the house was built about thirty-five years ago.

If you look hard enough you still can see some history dating back about 150 years ago; such as old house foundations, an old church and rock walls which separated property boundaries.

My wife and I are very happy and very proud of our home, and we thank God for helping us fulfill our American dream.

I started working at American Tool in the package department and worked my way up to the maintenance department. I have been with the company since 1990. My wife is also employed at American Tool. We have been married for five years.

Cambodia Country

Navy S. Oum

What a wonderful country I have! There are many places for a vacation and wonderful places for tourists (especially Angkorwat) and wonderful places for all the people around the world to free their minds.

Since I grew up I never get to learn about Cambodian history, but everything I say in this paper, I say what I saw and hear now I am not bragging.

Since I grew up I never see Cambodia go to any country and start a war first with another country.

My mother used to tell me only other countries come over to start war with our country. They love to live in our country and make businesses, dig for gold, mine for diamonds and other things that I could remember all about.

Any country loves to have the land and loves to take over Cambodia land.

Navy is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Crystal Vision

Gardi Babine

My eyes open with crystal vision but my voice goal is to speak crystal clear. No more beating around the bush. Letting body language speak unspoken words. Using common sense and careful thoughts as a guide. Using the tools I have learned, making sometimes difficult tasks easier on myself and other people. Taking each step one step further to reaching agreement or disagreement without sacrificing self respect for either. Therefore the skirmish seldom sees battle.

Overall views of commentary can envision mighty vistas once you have passed through a narrow-minded tunnel.

As a result of this class I find myself control for lack of knowledge on placid ground. My patience has extended to the point of gaining more results than frustration. Being able to distinguish which of the little things are just that and which are not at all what they seem to be. Of when the point has been made and when silence is golden.

Last weekend I was on the Penobscot Indian Reservation. As I sat talking with my two aunts both now in their eighties and the last of 15 children--I saw beyond glazed eyes but into the history of wrinkled faces who had seen my ancestors. I realized that through conversation I and my children might see them also. The old ways, the spirits that guided them out of daylight survival and nighttime fear. Not much has been said of the Abenaki, but I will listen and I will talk with proud blood running through my veins always seeking my heritage. Through conversation I will learn, question, observe, understand, laugh, and I will cry. I am proud of who I am.

From you I have learned many things--as co-workers, as acquaintances, as friends--and the most important thing is that I like you very much, each of you, for your special personality and being. I hope to see you in phase II of the communication class.

My True Story

Sophy Som

I was living with my parents when I was a teenager, and then I was married in 1971.

I was living with my husband and we built the house by ourselves. Then one year later I had a son, we decided to have a business. I opened the store at home selling food to grow my new life. I made good money, and my husband worked with the Governor of Buttomboung. We had a good life by that time. Then 3 years later I have one more baby boy. After the baby was born 3 months the Communists took over in my country. They said everybody go to the farm just for three days do not take anything with you. Everybody went to the farm and never came back home for almost 5 years. They killed a lot of people who worked with the Government like soldiers. But my husband was a very lucky man. They put him in the jail for a month, they didn't kill him, they let him go home free. Everybody worked hard but there was not enough food to eat. Everybody got sick, 80% died.

In 1979 the Vietnamese took over my country and then I thought someday it will collapse again and they will kill us. So I decided to go to the Thailand border. My family and I walked to Thailand in just one week. When I got there I saw a lot of people escape to the Thailand border like my family. My family and I slept there for one night. When I woke up early in the morning the Thailand Government had an announcement. It said everyone had to take the bus, and we will go to the good place for you. Then my family and I were so happy. And then we took the bus, all day and all night. I got there at 6 o'clock in the morning. They said everyone get out of the bus, and take a walk up the mountain. And then we were so scared to death, none of them ever came to this place before. It was a big jungle. I saw a lot of mine fields, and a lot of people were killed by mines exploding. My family and I walked back home for three months. We had no money, and no food to eat at all. We used gold to trade for food. Then we stayed there for two months. Then I heard the American U.N. came to the Thailand border to help my people who had no home, and then I thought about going back to Thailand again. We came to Thailand the second time to stay there for almost 2 years. We came to the U.S. on August 6, 1981 and the first place was Rochester, Minnesota. My family and I are very happy to live here. We thank the U.S. Government for taking us in here.

Sophy is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Tell Me About the Good Old Days, Grandpa

Martha Blake

Grandpa wouldn't it be nice to talk with
you today, about the good old days gone by ?
What was it like back when you were a
young man ?
The life and times are so different from
now to back then.
I remember you Grandpa, sitting in your
favorite chair and looking out the window.
People have told me about you Grandpa but
I never knew you.
You knew me from an infant to a very
young girl, this was too early for me to
remember.
I miss you Grandpa and wish you
could tell me about the good old days.
What was it like to share your life with
Grammie Sarah ?
Oh Grandpa what was it like back then,
tell me about the good old days.

Historic issues discussed in my reading and writing class, along with a country music song is what prompted my thoughts on the lines I have written. A brief family genealogy; great grandparents Sarah E Towle (Leavitt), James H. Towle, grandmother Beatrice M. Hillcock (Towle), mother Barbara N. Griffin (Hillock). During their early years together my great grandparents traveled with a portable saw mill that went to Buxton, Standish, and Limington. They had two daughters, Beatrice and Elizabeth. Life was harsh back in the early 1900's, when they traveled with the mill. Later in 1927 they ran a laundry from their home on South Street, located in the village area of Gorham.As a young teenager I spent my summers with my great Grammie; we would visit her friends, take short trips and have delicious Sunday dinners. Those were the good old days. Now I feel they are my guardian angels, watching over from above.

I work at American Tool Co., Gorham, ME. My hobbies are reading, special occasion photo albums, calico photo frames, miscellaneous hand crafts, Garth Brooks and listening to country music. I have five children and one granddaughter: Raymond, Timothy, Frederick, Erica, Sarah and Kayla.

A Selection of Language Experience Stories

A Story About My Life

Tann Tem Chork

When I was 5 years old, I went to live with my uncle. I went to school but only for a short time because they were afraid I would write to a boy. In Cambodia, girls went to school only for a short time.

Then, I went to work on a farm. It was hard work and I didn't like it. But, I had to do it. When I was 23 years old, I married and lived with my husband in Cambodia. My daughter was born in 1979. In 1979, we went to Thailand. We walked for 3 days and 3 nights to get to Thailand.

In 1983, I came to the United States. At first, I lived in Augusta. I didn't like living there because I didn't understand English and everything was different. In 1984, I came to Portland. I like living in Portland, and I work at Barber Foods.

This is a picture of my house in Cambodia (opposite page). There is a mango tree in front of the house. I miss my house and it's been twenty-eight years since I have lived there. In 1994, I went to visit my country and my Uncle still lives in this house.

A Story About My Life

Kim Lang Cha

When I was young, I worked on a farm with my father and mother. When I was 13, my father died so I lived with mother. When I was 21, I married and my husband and I lived in Cambodia. In Cambodia, I stayed home. I was a housewife.

In 1979, I left Cambodia and went to Thailand. I lived in Thailand for 4 years. I came to the United States in 1984. I've been here for 11 years. I work at Barber Foods. I like to work. It's better than being a housewife.

A Story About My Life

Tou Senesombath

When I was 11 years old, I was very poor. I lived with my aunt. We went everywhere together. I like living with my aunt because she was very nice.

When I was 15 my uncle went from Laos to Thailand. My aunt and I went to Thailand to see my uncle. My uncle wasn't home. He went to work with the Communists. My aunt and I went back to Laos and my aunt was very upset because my uncle went with the Communists.

A Story About My Life

Ty Nguyen

When my daughter and I left Vietnam, we went to the Philippines. My daughter was pregnant. I went to school in the Philippines for 24 weeks but we couldn't leave the Philippines until my daughter had her baby. When I came to the United States, it was the same day as today, March 20, in 1992.

I was in the Philippines for 10 months. One day a volcano erupted at 9:00 in the morning. It was as dark as night. The ash came down like snow. The earth moved all night. It was an earthquake.

A Story About My Life

Nenad Vanovac

I'm from Bosnia and coming to America was an important experience for me. My country Yugoslavia is at war. I came to America in September of 1994. I'm experiencing a new life here in America because of a change in language, work and schools for my children.

In my country, I owned a house. Today, I live in an apartment and pay six hundred dollars rent. I don't have a car. I work at a new job. I'm a line worker at Barber Foods. This is my first job in America.

My children do good in school. They speak good English. My son Bojan is six years old and he goes to Reiche School. My son Vedran goes to King School. My daughter Sonja is sixteen years old and she goes to high school.

Tann, Ty, Kim, Nenad and Tou are all students in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Afterword

We live in a faceless age: printouts, faxes, answering machines, barcodes, computer generated voices; it is a distant and hurried existence. Speeding along the information superhighway we are all prey to the oppressive forces of post-modern society. Prepackaged foods, books on tape, video education, automated tellers and new technology save time and deliver the goods faster.

The writings in this collection offer a contrast to the beep of the scanner, the monotone voice telling us which button to push and the flickering images on the TV screen. Listen carefully to the voices of these writers and you will hear the words of real people sharing their worries, laughing, telling stories and spreading joy. As you read, please take the time to enjoy the unique perspectives.of the many authors and celebrate their courage, for it is not easy to look inside yourself and examine your feelings and thoughts. I would ask that you consider when was the last time you took the opportunity to reflect on your past or praised the ones you love?

I have been fortunate to be able to work with some of the writers in this volume. The time we spend is a moment away from the pressures of our daily struggle to survive. Words alone may not change the world, yet it is through writing that we are reconnected to the soul of our existence and discover the possibility of liberation from the hectic lives we lead. My hope is that reading *Writers at Work* may have provided you with the inspiration to join us, and that you too, will take the time to express yourself in writing.

Bo Hewey

Bo Hewey lives in Portland on Munjoy Hill - with his wife Kristie, two daughters and two cats. "I feel very lucky to have been able to work with the people I have met in my classes and I thank them for all they have helped me learn."

CASCO BAY PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION

University
of Southern
Maine

Writers at Work

Winter 1995

Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education

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Foreword

This issue may appear smaller than its predecessor, but it is by no means any less enticing. What began as a stack of paper heaped on my desk has been gradually transformed into an exciting collection of stories and poems.

It takes time to compile writings into a publication. Mostly the search becomes looking for a way to bring justice to each author's work. Usually during this growth process, a presence emanates from the writings. As photos are aligned with stories, a spark of life suddenly surfaces - one which captures elegantly just who these writers are.

Credit and special thanks are extended to Chess - a photographer whose stunning black and white portraits speak for themselves. My belief is that in all things, simplicity is always best, it lessens the likelihood of distortion or masking of true perceptions. For this, a layout which celebrates and is respectful of each writer enables a story to be told and allows each person's voice to surface.

The magnitude of stories and the words of the authors cover a huge spectrum of life experiences. We are inspired by the works and hope that the results that sprang forth out of the writing process are as satisfying, delightful, engaging and remarkable for each reader. We know you will enjoy the invigorating pieces of prose and poetry in the pages to follow.

We are thrilled to spread the word that the Casco Bay Partnership has expanded to include seven business partners. As classes get underway and authors emerge in workplace settings, a guarantee for future editions of Writers-at-Work is solidified.

Linda J. Evans

Linda Evans is Assistant Project Coordinator for the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. She is a recent graduate of the Masters of Literacy Program at the University of Southern Maine. She has lived in Gorham, Maine for nearly three years.

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Dear Writers at Work,

I have been in education most of my life, first in my native country and then in the United States. During all the years that I have spent in education, what has sustained me is the growing awareness of the lives of my students- their hopes, their struggles, their accomplishments.

It often strikes me that it is very difficult to capture in any tangible way what takes place in education. We see blackboards, chairs, tables and books. But, what is so hard to see is the struggle to bring an idea to expression, the effort to transform energy into a story, song or poem. To me, this collection of writings represents a tangible manifestation of what otherwise so easily escapes our notice. We see here the struggle and the energy that is writing.

I would like to congratulate you on the courage and dedication that is embodied in these pieces. Your writing will, I think, help others appreciate better the inner growth that takes place in education.

Sincerely,

Nazaré Conway

I have been involved in education both here and in Portugal. I've been working with people from other cultures for fifteen years- first as Education Coordinator for the Refugee Resettlement Program and lately as an ESL teacher for Portland Adult Education.

Contents

2 Changes in Vietnam ..... *Yan Lam*
4 My Life ..... *Lom Choup*
7 Clouds of Happiness ..... *Charlene Rideout*
9 Starting Again ..... *Tann Chork*
10 Hugs
10 Lita
11 Ultimate Chicken ..... *Tony Falco*
12 Changes in Time
13 The Sea ..... *Bruce Cary*
14 My Trip to America ..... *Kim Lang Cha*
14 Life with my Aunt and Uncle ..... *Tou Senesombath*
15 The Life Within ..... *Thomas Wheatly*
16 A Lesson Learned ..... *Jim Lineham*
17 The Iron Bridge ..... *Wendell Bourgoin*

Changes in Vietnam

Yan Lam

Vietnam today is much better than nineteen years ago. There are new highways, more manufacturing, new small companies, new houses, new buildings, new shopping centers, and restaurants are growing up like bean sprouts, so many of them. It was very good when I went back to visit in 1990, and it is even better now.

I came from Saigon in the south of Vietnam. The population is about 3 ½ million. It is Vietnam's largest city. HaNoi is the capital, the next largest city. It has a population of about 2.5 million. The whole area of Vietnam is about 127,242 square miles. The greatest distance from the North to the South is 1,030 miles and from the East to the West is 380 miles, and it has a coastline of 2,038 miles.

Vietnam produces rice, coffee, rubber, sugar, and all sorts of sea products to export. The exports for 1993 were a 20% increase over 1992. Vietnam is the third largest country producing rice in the world.

Vietnam has nice beaches around the coast. It has very nice weather, the temperature is around 80 to 95 degrees. (Except during the Monsoon season.) The environment is getting better. It is attracting a lot of tourists.

The whole country is under restructure. A lot of foreigners are investing there from France, Japan, Germany, America, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and more.

France and Japan have contracted to supply and install an undersea fiber optic cable system, which has enough capacity to carry 80,000 simultaneous phone conversations. New phone lines are up. A long distance call from the U.S. to Vietnam used to cost 7 dollars a minute and now a call during the weekend costs only 62 cents per minute.

Chevron Corporation and Texaco Inc. are buying crude oil from the Bach Ho (White Tiger) oil field. A new power station is being built.

Federal Express Corporation now has service to Vietnam, which will be easier and more convenient for people to send parcels or gifts home.

It also has a couple of American banks over there now, like the American Bank and CitiBank. The banking system in Vietnam has a very bad reputation, not that many people would trust the bank. The time that I went back to visit, a couple of banks went bankrupt and people lost all their money. People in Vietnam are not like in the U.S.

The way of life is also getting better. If the Communists keep it open for people to go back there to invest in the future I believe Vietnam will become another big business port just like Hong Kong.

Eventually I hope someday I will be able to go back there and restart my father's business, which was selling raw metal and a lead refinery company, which provided lead to newspaper companies, battery companies, the fishing industry and other companies.

Overall Vietnam has improved a lot. It is much better than nineteen years ago and the way of life is getting much better.

My name is Yan, but I can't cook! I came from Vietnam. I've lived in Maine for fourteen and a half years now and I presently work at Hannaford Brothers Company for twelve years. I like my job very much. English is my third language. I speak Chinese and Vietnamese also. I will try to learn and improve my English whenever I have a chance. I'd like to have my own business someday, maybe even a restaurant! Hey!!! I learn fast.

My Life

Lom Choup

lived in Cambodia. I worked on a farm. But in 1979, the Vietnamese came in Cambodia. All my family stayed together for three days after the Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge came in Cambodia. They shot and killed a lot of people. I was scared. I thought they would kill me and my family. We had to run. We got separated and I lost my mother. I ran with my husband and son up the mountain. We walked for three months. We had a little food but not enough to eat. Sometimes my family ate leaves from the tree. I saw a lot of people die because the leaves they ate were poison. At nighttime I slept. I walked for three months to Thailand. In Thailand I lived in the camp for six years.

When I lived in the camp the U.N. gave me enough food to eat every week. I didn't like staying in the camp all the time. But, if we went out of the camp it was easy for the Thai soldiers to kill us.

In 1985 I came to the U.S. After one week I wrote a letter to my country. In a month I got a letter back that said all of my family was still alive.

Now I'm happy.

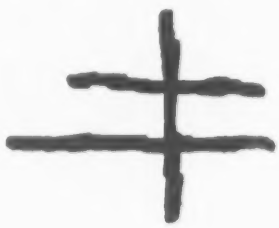
Lom is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

My name is Charlene and I reside in Portland's Old Port with my kitten Gully. One of my biggest goals is to live life on life's terms and be happy.

Clouds of Happiness

Charlene Rideout

Clouds in the sky,
Like cottonballs hanging by invisible strings.
The sun,
partially hidden as though forbidden to show its
radiant beauty.
        In the air,
        salt
small insects flying freely above the
crystal clear water
        in the water,
        floating bodies and multi-colored balls.
Crashing waves
forceful,
delightful,
high,
smashing into unfinished sandcastles
scattered
like a lump of sugar
dissolved by hot coffee
and the few faint sounds of laughter
fill my mug of life to the rim with
            HAPPINESS



My name is Tann Chork. I am from Cambodia. I live in the U.S.A. for 11 years. I work at Barber Foods for 10 years. When I came to work I didn't speak any English, but I use my hand signs. But now I know English a little. I am also trying to learn more.

Starting Again

Tann Chork

When I was a little girl I lived with my mother. But my uncle didn't have a child. He wanted to talk with my father. "Please, can I have your child," he asked. My parents said, "okay, you can have one child," and he picked me.

I went to live with my uncle and his wife. I was five years old and he let me go to school. When I came back from school I had to do everything at home. When I was a teenager my uncle wanted me to quit school. He didn't want me to learn anymore. He didn't give me freedom. He beat me when I didn't listen to him.

I married when I was 22 years old. I didn't live with my father. My husband and I built our house. One year after I had a child. When she was one month old we left our country to go to Thailand because there wasn't enough food and I thought my country had Communists. My country said I could stay but I had to go. We walked one week up the mountain all day and all night. I was scared we would die because if they saw us, they would kill us.

When we came to the U.S. my family was so happy. But when I came, I didn't know any English and we didn't have any money. What could I do? My sponsor helped me find a job. She also taught me some English. Now, when I want to work I get money to buy anything if I want to.

In 1994 I went back to my country to see my cousin. I was so happy. They thought I was dead. When I got there, they were surprised. I had fun, but I had to go home and see my daughters.

Poetry Collection

Tony Falco

Hugs

Every living thing needs the warmth of a hug.
Hugs are a means of happiness.
Hugs can be done for fun,
Whether in the dark of night,
Or on the beach under the sun.

Hugs can be a sign of friendship,
Or given when a good deed is done.

Hugs are a means of showing joy,
Or during the tears of sorrow,
Even if you're a mother of ten,
Or becoming a bride tomorrow.

Even a gentleman with a masculine sense of pride,
If someone came to give him a hug,
He would not know where to hide.

So when you're feeling down and out,
And just not feeling so well,

Reach out and grab a friend,
Or just a passerby,
To help you share your emotion,
Even if you don't know why.

Lita

O Lita you're full of charm and grace.
You're always there with a smile on your face,

When we walked on the beach I knew it was love,
You must have been sent from someone above.

You're always there to lend a helping hand,
On me you put little demand.

You always work hard at your job and being a mother,
So to me there will be no other.

We have had times of laughter and tears,
Your love has grown stronger throughout the years.

Although we may be miles apart,
You will always be deep in my heart.

You're a great friend and wife,
You will always be the love of my life.

Waking up with a woman as beautiful as you,
Makes me think how much better can a man really do.

Ultimate Chicken

Barber Foods chicken is pleasant to the taste,
So go to your grocery with no time to waste.

On the assembly line to be battered and breaded,
Packed in cases, put on a truck to the stores they are headed.

Pick up an entree for two or a four pack,
There right in the frozen food
right up on the rack.

They have not just one, but a
whole bunch,
Served as a meal, or at a party
ready to munch.

My favorite has ham and cheese
they call Cordon Bleu,
You can buy in a six pack or a
pack just for two.

They have stores that go from
coast to coast,
That give them reason to smile
and boast.

So tell a friend to go out and buy,
One taste of Barber Foods
Chicken and they will know why.

Hi, my name is Tony. I am married to my wife Lita and have two children, Nicholas and Makalla. I have been employed for over one year at Barber Foods in the maintenance department.

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Changes in Time

Bruce Cary

Where has the time gone? It seems like yesterday that I was a little kid playing ball, listening to my mother calling me in for supper. Boy, I didn't think I would really miss those days; let me tell you I miss them more and more each day that goes by. When you're a kid everything looks so real/big. The little things seem so important to you that it scares you. You have so many heroes.

As the time goes on the little things go away. You look at life in a whole different way. That kind of tells you that you're growing up, but you really don't want to or you're just not ready to. Wow! Where has all the time gone? Who knows? But it is gone. All the things your parents would tell you and you wouldn't listen to them because you thought they were wrong and you were right; boy were you wrong in most cases. Now that you're an adult and find out how hard life really is you often wish you had listened to your parents once in awhile. Boy, if I could take time back, but I know I can't.

Now as you get older it just seems like your life is programmed; you do the same thing everyday--like your job. You have to report for work everyday, but you know that you really don't like it. However, you know that you have to have one if you want to survive in this world today and have things in this life without breaking the law. You want to make sure your family has a good life and to try to make their life easier for them when they go out in the real world. And you want to make sure they are better prepared for life when their turn to go out in the real world comes. Plus, you want to be a role model for your kids if you can. Because when kids are small or young they look to their parents as their heroes. So you try to show them the best you can, even if you don't like your life or the way you have lived it up till now. Because some day, I don't know when, it will get better; I hope. That is why everybody should take life one day at a time.

The Sea

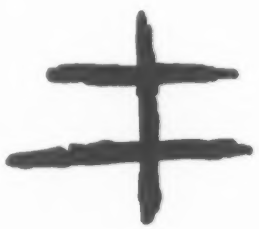
Bruce Cary

The most beautiful thing in the world is the sea. Knowing that anytime that you are out there it can take you away. That is strong. Not knowing what really is in the sea is no surprise to me; there could be anything in there.

To me the sea is just one big giant killer that has taken a lot of lives away from people's families. I mean millions of lives. And there is nothing that can be done about it nor will there ever be anything done about it. And why should there be?

To me the sea is God crying and it takes the chosen few that it wants. It doesn't play favorites. It takes all kinds: the good, the bad, black or white. It sees no color. It can take you on land or in the air. The sea is strong. The sea answers to no one. It is almost like the sea is alive. Sometimes it is calm and sometimes it is rough, but either way it can still kill you at anytime. But I love what is in the sea. There are all kinds of foods, plants, rocks and dirt and when you put them all together in the sea it is the most beautiful sight in the world.

Bruce is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.



My Trip to America

Kim Lang Cha

My name is Kim Lang Cha. I was born in Cambodia. I had lived there for two years. The reason why my husband and I came to America was because of war. There were Communist soldiers shooting people everywhere and so my family and I decided to leave our country. After we left our country we stayed in a refugee camp in Thailand for four years. Then my family and I took a flight on the airplane to the United States.

The first state we went to was Washington. My family and I stayed in a hotel. We didn't know much about the technology here. The phone rang and we all jumped on the bed because we were scared. We stayed in the hotel for one night. Then we flew on an airplane to Portland, Maine.

My sisters-in-law met us at the airport. They took us home to our new apartment. Now we live in a house that we just bought. I like my new home because I feel safe.

Kim is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Life with my Aunt and Uncle

Tou Senesombath

When I started work at Barber Foods I didn't know English. If I needed something I used my hands. I was so upset. I didn't know how to take the bus. My husband showed me how to take a bus. Now I know English a little better. One thing, English is very hard for me to read and write.

Tou is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

The Life Within

Thomas Wheatly

The stream it runs wild and free
It shimmers and shines
In the burning sun of the day
Its volume brings life

To the many that wait below
for its health and beauty
That it holds within

No one knows why it happens
This gift of life
That flows gently past
Only the promise
That it will always last

I have worked at Hannaford Brothers for about 7 years and have struggled to further my education. These classes have helped me with my position as a safety representative and shop steward as well as many other job functions at work and at home. I look forward to taking more classes in the future. Thanks to my teacher, Bo Hewey, for giving me a different outlook on learning.

A Lesson Learned

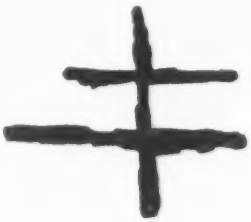
Jim Lineham

I slammed my bat to the ground, threw my glove in the back of the truck and drove away. Still very angry at striking out and losing the "big game", I slung my car door shut with a crash. I then barged into the house, said a few choice words to my wife and cracked open a beer.

As I sat drinking my beer, I started flipping through the channels on the T.V. I stopped on CNN and started watching because I saw players in baseball uniforms.

The news was doing a report on Little League baseball's 'Challenger Division'. I watched as kids in wheelchairs played ball. I saw 'physically challenged' youngsters trying to hit and throw. I saw one boy continually miss a ball that was being thrown to him. Throughout that whole ordeal the smile never left his face. Then I knew ....

Jim lives and works in Portland, Maine. He has his own opinions and is not afraid to express them, but also tries to respect the opinions of others.



The Iron Bridge

Wendell Bourgoin

As a young lad, I was raised in the little town of Van Buren. It lies in Northern Maine on the border of Canada. We used to spend most of our summer vacation fishing and swimming. In a small town there wasn't much to do for kids.

It was June 20, 1967 and school had just been out for three days. A classmate of mine stopped at the house to see if I wanted to go fishing with him. I asked my mother if it was OK to go. She said, "yes, make sure not to go by that old iron bridge." She knew that it was a dangerous place for kids to go. I promised not to go there, grabbing my fishing pole and headed out the door. The house we were living in at the time wasn't far from the railroad tracks. My mother could see the railroad track from the kitchen window, and if we were walking on the tracks she would have known that we were going to the bridge.

My friend, Gerald, said, "let's go across the field so she won't see us." I told him I had never been to that place. He said, "That's where all the big fish are." So I said, "okay."

It was about a mile walk to get there. This bridge could be seen from miles away. It stood high in the sky. It had that rustic look. It looked like it had been standing there since the early age of man. Most of the paint had peeled off and there were big rusty patches protruding. I remember my father telling my older brother, Rodney, the story his grandfather had told him. Years ago, there was no boundary. The whole area was all part of Canada. France and the United States almost went to war over where the boundaries would be. Both countries decided to use the St. John River to separate the border. Canada lost a lot of good farm land. The soil is rich in nutrients. The mountains in the far distance stop the strong winds. Van Buren and all those other towns along the river set in a valley became part of the U.S. The bridge down river was built for cars only. They used to transport heavy freight across on barges. There was a big cable that would pull it across by steam power wheels. The railroad company decided to build a bridge up river to transport all the heavy freight across. Both the Canadian and U.S. Railroad Co. were making a lot of money. The train would go by the custom house and they would check all the boxcars out and then it would go down about two miles, and cross the railroad bridge. Today they use the new bridge that was built in 1976. Most of the freight is trucked in now. It's very seldom they use the railroad bridge.

Then I heard Gerald say, "Follow me!" He slid down this I-beam down underneath the bridge which stopped at a cement platform underneath the bridge. It didn't

seem to be safe but down I went. It looked like a little room cut out of cement pillars.

We started fishing and caught a few. All of a sudden my pole was bent in half. "I must have a whale on the end of this pole!" I started reeling it in. It felt like it weighed forty pounds. When I got it out of the water, it appeared to look like an arm or a human part. Gerald said, "once in awhile you catch one of those!" My grandfather told me years ago there use to be an old cemetery on the river bank a little ways up. One spring, the river flooded the cemetery and most of it got washed out. There's a lot of skeleton bones on the bottom of the river. My grandfather said it would cost too much money to try to gather all the skeletons. The town didn't have that kind of money. Whenever we pull one out we throw them over in here. There was a shelf above our head. You had to stand on this old apple crate so you were able to see them up there. It appeared to be twenty to twenty-five bones lying there. "Someday we'll have to take them back," said Gerald.

I said to myself, no way.

All of a sudden we could hear voices above us. There appeared to be three other kids standing on the bridge. We could barely see them between the gaps in the railroad ties. Gerald yelled out, "Hey guys!" He seemed to know them. "Let's go," he said, and up the I-beam he went. I could tell he had been here lots of times! It didn't take him long to get on top. "Come on, we're waiting for you." I started up and when I was half way, I looked down at the river. It was a sixty foot drop. I was a little nervous, but made it to the top. "Wendell, this is Pat, Don, and Rodney." Pat said, "You guys want to go to Canada?" I said, "How?" for there was a fence in the middle of the bridge, with barbwire at the top, like they have at a state prison to keep people in. But this one was to keep people out. "This way," said Pat as he started to climb the I-beam that was at an angle and it appeared to be about eighty feet tall. Gerald and the other guys all started up. I didn't want to go, because if my mother ever found out I'd be dead meat.

I yelled out, "I can't go! I told my mother I'd mow the lawn." Within minutes they were on the other side of the fence and fading out of site. And besides, if they got caught, they would be in serious trouble. They were in another country without going through customs.

When I got home I noticed my father's car was in the yard. "Hi son, I have something for you in the back of the car!" I opened the rear car door, and there lay this big black cat on the back window. It was huge! I went to pet him, and he almost took my hand off. "Be careful, he's a little wild. He's half bobcat, it will take time to get used to us." The cat was bigger than a dog we once had. The cat jumped out of the car and into the field in the back of the house. "Just put some food out, he'll come back." I got a hotdog and set it by a tree! I sat at the picnic table and waited for hours, and the cat never came out.

The next morning around 6:00 a.m. I could hear this trashing noise in the garage. I got dressed and went down to investigate! When I looked into the garage, there was that black cat ripping up the trash bags. The minute he saw me, he ran out and back into the field. This went on for a few weeks. Mom was getting outraged, "That cat has to go!" She picked up the phone, "Hi Dick! I'm having a cat problem. Could you take care of it?" Then she was silent for a moment. "Thanks," and she hung up the phone. "Mom who was that?" "Never you mind!" I didn't want to nag her to find out who Dick was. Mom had quite the temper. I remember once when I broke a window while playing baseball. She sent me to my room without supper. Dad once said, "I wish you would control that Irish temper."

That afternoon I decided to go fishing by myself. My parents had gone in town to do some errands. I started to go down the path that was behind the house that led to the river. When I got to the railroad tracks that crossed the path, all I could think of was that iron bridge. Chills came up my spine just thinking of those bones on that shelf. The urge to go there was stronger than me. The next thing I knew I was heading towards the bridge. When I got there, I slid down the I-beam, that lead underneath the bridge. I started baiting my hook, and all of a sudden I could hear footsteps getting closer and

closer. I could see a heavy set man between the railroad ties. His face was badly burned. He was holding a burlap bag in one hand. He reached in his back pocket and pulled out a pair of leather gloves. He reached into the bag and he had that black cat by the neck. He walked out next to the edge of the bridge and started squeezing the cat's neck. The cat's eyes were bulging out of its head, body fluids were gushing out of its anus. Blood started dripping out of the corner of its mouth! The cat was clawing at the man's hand, but it didn't seem to help; he was wearing those gloves. When the cat stopped quivering for its life, the man let it go.

All this time I kept saying to myself, I hope he doesn't see me. I was afraid he'd do the same to me. I almost yelled out at him when he started to squeeze the cat's neck, but the fear within me was too strong! His face was so badly burned like a monster in a horror movie.

When the cat hit the water, it disappeared out of site. All of a sudden, it had popped to the surface and was trying to swim for shore. I heard the man running away. Then he was back in seconds. He had his arms full of rocks. He started throwing them at the cat. One of them hit him, but it was still swimming. The cat made it to shore and disappeared into the tall grass. Then the man left, and he faded out of site. I climbed up and ran home. Mom was making supper. I felt like telling her what I had seen, but she would have sent me to my room for who knows how long. She had warned me about going there!

A few weeks later we were watching the news on T.V. and a picture of the man I had seen on the bridge was on the screen. They had pronounced him dead. Someone had seen him fall off the bridge and they couldn't find his body. I asked my mother if she knew this man. "Yes, Dick is a strange one. If you have a problem with a cat or dog, all you had to do is call Dick and he took care of it! There is no Vet in town to put them to sleep, and it didn't seem to bother Dick to get rid of them."

That night when I went to bed, all I could think of was that man. I heard light footsteps coming up the stairs. Then it jumped on the bed. It was that black cat! He had no eyes, just two big black holes, that appeared to be deep and hollow. His ears looked like fish gills. His body was partly decayed. When he opened his mouth to growl at me, his two front fangs were spotted with blood. Some of his ribs were protruding through his body. I must be dreaming. This can't be real, I must wake up. The cat was right in my face. He was making these gurgling noises but I could understand what he was saying. He kept saying, "Come with me!" I felt my body rising out of bed. I had no control over my body. It's as if the cat was overpowering me. The cat led me to the railroad tracks and headed towards the bridge. The cat led me to the river underneath the bridge, and started to swim out still saying, "Come with me." I kept saying no, but his power over me was stronger. I started swimming out, and half way the cat went under and pulled me in. The bottom of the river was covered with bones, and there was Dick pinned under a tree. I could see these dogs and cats like creatures tearing at his flesh. Where their ears were, appeared to be like fish gills. Their legs had turned to flippers, like on a

seal. Their tail looked like a snake, with sharp thorns sticking out. The water was all red where they were feasting. You could see the blood slowly seeping out of the man's gaping hole in his chest. I have to wake up, I'm having a bad nightmare. Then the black cat swam in front of my face, and opened his mouth. You could see his long fang teeth with spotted blood on them. I wanted to swim to the surface, but I couldn't move. The cat had possessed my body.

"Wendell, breakfast is ready. Come on down." I sat in bed, all wet. I was shivering, and glad I was awake. It was all a nightmare. I got out of bed and took a shower. When I started to go down the stairs, I saw cat footprints. They were imprinted in blood in the faded yellow carpet. I ran outside, my heart was racing fast, I pinched my arm to make sure I was awake. It was late that day before I went back into the house. My mother asked where I had been all day. I told her I was at a friend's home all day, when I was really in the woods, not too far from the house. I would go there once in a while when I wanted to think things out. When I went up to my bedroom that night, the blood stains in the stairway were gone. I knew my mother hadn't cleaned it up because she would have asked me about it. It must have been a nightmare. I told myself I would never go back to that old iron bridge!

It was many years later that my brother, Rodney, told me that he had heard me talking in my sleep that night. He was the one who had put the cat footprints on the stairs. He had gotten up early that morning and got the cat next door. He had dipped the cat's paws in crushed strawberries! It was all a joke to him, but I had those nightmares for years after. I never forgave him for that. When I go back to visit with my relatives who still live up in Van Buren, as I arrive in town that old bridge still gives me the chills.

My grandfather told me once that the bridge is possessed! All those dead bodies that were washed out into the river years ago are just sitting there waiting for someone to throw in their pet cat or dog! He said that the dead skeleton's spirit enters the dead animal's body and they come back to life! They all swim across the river, and into Canada. Who knows where they all go! Even to this day, I have my doubts about his story!

If you ever go traveling to Northern Maine, and if you happen to be going through Van Buren, it would be wise not to visit that old iron bridge, unless you have a dead pet you want to get rid of! They say that they come back at night to haunt you in your dreams!

Sweet Dreams!

My name is Wendell Bourgoin. I've lived and worked in Southern Maine all of the last 20 years. I'm originally from Van Buren, Maine. I plan on moving back some day. I enjoy fishing, swimming, hunting, and wood working. I'm enrolled in a reading and writing class at work. Someday I'd like to write a book, maybe a mystery.

Afterword

The straightforward, honest tone of Writers at Work has made it the single most popular product of the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. Copies of this unpretentious volume continue to surface in corporate offices, on the bookshelves of University administrators, and upon the coffeetables of working folks, educators, and politicians alike. What makes this student-authored publication special is the clarity of voice in which employees from three different companies talk about themselves, their histories and aspirations. As a unique feature of the Casco Bay Partnership, the Writers at Work publication also adds an important ingredient to the concept of "workplace literacy". The relationship between personal narrative and work-related skills is often held up as dichotomous -- supposing that learning in the workplace is distinct and exclusive of "other types" of learning, such as lifeskills or personal growth. We, however, acknowledge and affirm that learning is an integrated process that involves the whole person --whether solving problems at work, at home, or in a new and unfamiliar country. The ability to express one's views, to engage others in meaningful dialogue, and to gain a deeper insight into who we are and the work that we do remains the essence of workplace literacy. Writers at Work helps us all to make the connection between real people, their stories, and the value of lifelong learning. So, in looking forward to the next edition, we can trust what our intuitions as readers have told us all along, that this little collection of prose and poetry is the real thing.

Nancy Martz

Nancy Martz is Project Director for the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education. She lives in Gorham, Maine with her husband Steve and two dogs, Zack and Zippy.

CASCO BAY PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION

University
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Writers at Work

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88

Foreword

We all write for many different reasons - to understand, to communicate with others formally and informally, to discover or clarify what we think, to entertain, in order to publish - we write because we have a need. Writing can take us away, puts us in touch with our deeper feelings, helps us to recount memories and capture life events which sometimes, almost remarkably, turn into stories.

The writers in this publication have taken the time to set the scene and weave out stories pieces they too have created for very different reasons. I give special thanks to each writer featured in *Writers at Work*. It is refreshing to hear your words, thoughts and the language you use to convey fresh images.

Using the words of John Barth, "the scene inside your house, inside your head, is more important that the scene outside". The scenes you have created have permitted us to permeate other cultures, to attempt to understand another's perspective and to enjoy reading. We don't need to know the reasons/why you've decided to write, it is enough that you have chosen to write and afforded us the chance to be inside your house.

Sincerely,

Linda Evans

Once again, I am delighted to share this publication of stories with a larger audience. It is a source of tremendous pride for the authors, teachers and our entire CBP project staff. Surely, it will make great summertime reading. My own interests of late are taking TESOL classes and learning to French braid my 4 year old daughter Brandan's hair.

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Dear Writers at Work,

Not very long ago a former teacher of mine reminded me that there can be a substantial difference between someone who has the title of "Professor" and someone who actually "professes." This was his none too subtle way of telling me that in some ways I had failed him. While being a "Professor" I was no longer professing in the sense that I was no longer discovering, proclaiming, and professing the truth as I saw it. My papers, articles, and lectures had become guarded, cautious, and innocuous. I was no longer standing by the responsibility of language.

I have since tried to change and have attempted to breathe life back into my words and ideas. Of course there are dangers in this. By professing we open ourselves up to the opinions of others, to their critical remarks and scrutiny, and to their evaluation of our words, sentiments, and ideas. But that must be the way it is in an open and dynamic culture. There is no other choice.

I welcome you, then, to a book of writing by "professors," those who tell us honestly what they see, how they feel. The authors, all members of the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education, have the courage to profess openly who they are, how they see themselves and the larger world, what they know to be so. They would find approval in the eyes of my former teacher. And in me they find admiration, respect, and appreciation for professing and giving meaning to the world through their words.

Mark B. Lapping

Mark B. Lapping is Professor & Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, USM

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Contents

2 Different Names and Their Meaning ..... *Yao Binimou*
5 Travel ..... *Ron Ball*
6 Languages ..... *Svetlana Davidenko*
9 Untold Story ..... *Ben Juma Arthur*
10 Douglass Hill Apple Harvest ..... *JoAnne Merritt*
13 An Impression ..... *Thanh Thi Nguyen*
14 About My Vacation In Canada ..... *Ahmad Jawad Muti*
17 War Is Bad ..... *Vincent Taban Paul*
18 My Grandmother ..... *Zeljka Rakovic*
18 My Life ..... *Zeljka Rakovic*
21 Homeless and Not Enough ..... *Tuyen Nguyen*
23 Shady Lady ..... *Pat Smith*
27 A Problem at Home ..... *Tesfay Desta*
28 A Red Fire Summer ..... *Duc Ho*
30 Poetry Collection ..... *Anonymous*
31 Starting Again ..... *Violeta Dobra*
32 My Work ..... *Ratko Glisic*
32 Life in a New Country ..... *Dragica Glisic*
35 My Hair Trouble ..... *Doris Parker*
36 An Important Experience ..... *Vy Thi Tuong Ho*
37 Friends or Angels ..... *Martha Blake*
38 An Important Experience ..... *Sophy Som*
40 A Journal: In the Wilds of Maine ..... *Don Dyer*
42 Zenica ..... *Milovan Zekanovic*
44 Speaking Heart ..... *Chim Meak*
44 Life in Japidy ..... *Chim Meak*
46 An Unforgotten Time ..... *Marlene Marston*
49 When I Left Afghanistan ..... *Farid Muti*
51 My Life Journal ..... *Chandy Vann*
52 An Important Experience ..... *Ly Ly Ho*
53 Legend of the Princess Tower ..... *Zhanna Dzabiev*
55 An Important Experience ..... *Thanh Thi Nguyen*
57 The Joys of Owning a Home ..... *Carol Conant*
59 The Great Outdoors ..... *Donald Strout*
61 Ocean Station Charley North Atlantic Weather Patrol ..... *Ted McCorrison*

Different Names and Their Meaning

Yao Binimou

My name is Yao.
Yao means he was born Thursday.
The week days have different names.
So when you were born any day of the week you
have a name of that day.
So Kwassi means born Sunday.
Kwadio means born Monday.
Kwabenan means born Tuesday.
Kwaku means born Wednesday.
Yao means born Thursday.
Koffi means born Friday.
Kwame means born Saturday.
Those names belong to men.

Same thing for the women.
The following names belong to them.
Kossia was born Sunday.
Adja was born Monday.
Abenan was born Tuesday.
Akwa was born Wednesday.
Yaa was born Thursday.
Affoua was born Friday.
Ama was born Saturday.

And my last name is Binimou.
Binimou means if you don't know
Someone else can teach you.
Or ask somebody
Someone will show you.

I'm from the Ivory Coast (West African). I started to work at Barber Foods in May 1995.

I've worked at Wood Structures for 8 years. Prior to that, I did 10 years in the Air Force. My major hobby is investing through Mutual Funds in the stock market. I enrolled in Workplace Education for self-improvement and would recommend the classes to anyone interested.

Travel

Ron Ball

The year I graduated from High School, my best friend and I decided to plan an adventure. We worked the summer and saved money so we could travel around the western half of the United States.

We started out hitchhiking in Oceanside, California, one fall September day. We ventured through Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona and returned home. We saw many wonderful sights, such as the Redwoods of California, Crater Lake Oregon, Yellowstone National Park, the Grand Canyon, etc.

A unique experience we encountered, will always stick with me. We had been traveling with a couple for about a week, through Washington, to Spokane where we saw the World's Fair. From there we ventured to a small park about 20 miles from Yellowstone Park. We arrived late at night; it was cold and we hadn't eaten yet. So we set up camp and started a fire in a cement barbecue. We ate, then went to bed. Since it was so late this night we didn't clean our dishes or put them away. This usually is a big blunder while camping.

I curled up in my sleeping bag against the cinder blocks; they were still warm and I fell asleep. Shortly after, I was startled by a large skunk who was perched on my chest eating out of the pots and pans that we had failed to clean and put away. I was frozen almost in shock by this most unwanted guest. When the skunk had finished partaking in his meal, angrily, I began screaming profanities and throwing rocks at him. This is one cold September morning that I will never forget. Someday I will be telling this story to my grandchildren around a campfire, maybe on a brisk September morning.

Languages

Svetlana Davidenko

The people live over the world in the different countries, they speak different languages, they have their own traditions. But not one of them have any doubt about which one language is the best over the world. Everyone will say his own native language is the best. That's why I'm no exception. I think Russian language is the best. I love my language because all the human feelings, the beauty of nature, the love people express to each other, the mother's love to her children, Russian language only can express exactly all these feelings. The best poems that I ever read, are Russian. The best songs which I ever heard are Russian.

But my native language - that is my favorite. And I never argue with people from other countries. No doubt, everyone will say his native language is the best. That is the truth. Each language over the world is like a mirror, which reflects the culture of the nation it comes from.

When I hear Italian people talking it seems to me there is music in their speech. And it's true, because the Italian music is really one of the best over the world. The language of the Scandinavian people seems to me like a sea storm and all the beauty of that severe land you can hear in the conversation of people.

The German language is expressive of the accuracy of German life. The American language came from England and has been changed for many years. There are now many different dialects in America that reflect many nations and countries. The American language seems to me as just a business language.

Svetlana Davidenko is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

I am a new workplace education student
I am trying to do my best to improve my English

Untold Story

Ben Juma Arthur

This is a story that can't be told (untold) by Mr. Ben Juma on the hardest time journey to the neighboring country Kenya, in January 1992, midnight at 12:00 AM.

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to share with you my little story by the title Untold. It was the above time, month, and year that I had decided to move out of my country, because of harassment and persecution by the SUDANESE GOVERNMENT.

On that year I began to cross my country, and it took me three months to reach Kenya. It took me such a long time because of the jungles, valleys and mountains, I couldn't know the directions to Kenya.

The Military Government didn't want the students to learn English, particular to the southerners who are mostly Christians. The students came up with anger on the streets to demonstrate, trying to beg the Government concerning the new policy.

However the life was growing radically worse, so I decided to form the students decision. But it was very frustrating to both parents and some politicians.

When I was in Kenya, I began to feel so sad for my colleagues, friends who had lost their life. At least, among the three hundred students who had moved out of the country, few of them are now in the USA.

Douglass Hill Apple Harvest

JoAnne Merritt

In the fall of the year when the nights are cool, the apples of Five Fields Farm on Douglass Hill in Sebago, begin to ripen. They just don't ripen over night mind you. They start in the spring with the most beautiful apple blossoms that you have ever seen, the white and pink blossoms envelope each tree so much that you don't even see the tree. You just see a mound of flowers, like clouds sitting in a field. When blossoms are on the trees, the honey bees arrive to pollinate the trees. Then with the warm days and the good spring rains the apples begin to grow. It takes all summer for the apples to grow and they need a lot of care. The trees need to be sprayed for disease after each rain and the trees need to be mowed around when the grass gets high so that the rain will soak into the ground and the apples will grow larger.

In July, the Jamaicans arrive to help with the harvest. The Jamaicans usually help with the mowing and the irrigation, getting the crates ready to be filled with the delicious red apples. They work long hours, usually twelve hours a day or more in the hot July sun. At the end of the day everyone goes up to the farmhouse. Usually one man is in charge of cooking a nourishing meal, this may include chicken, rice and Jamaican dumplings. The whole kitchen smells of the pungent spices--nutmeg, red pepper, and curry are among their favorite spices to cook with. Their favorite food is goat meat. They will travel miles to find the perfect plump goat for their end of the harvest feast of goat stew and dumplings. After dinner they rest, play cards, listen to reggae music from home, smoke ganja, read the Bible or socialize with a few of the fortunate locals.

Payday, which is usually Friday, is an exciting day for them. They get to go do their grocery shopping and shopping for their families back home. They like to go to the discount stores so they can buy many toys for their children at a reasonable price. In Jamaica, the main mode of transportation are small motorcycles. They all look for a good deal on a motor bike, and bicycles too. Errol told me he only makes $200.00 U.S. currency, working on his farm, growing what he can to sell at the market. He has a wife and three children to support. He raises goats, chickens, pigs and raises his own vegetables. The other 13 men have a life of similar sort, all working hard and only making a small amount of money. Some years the hurricanes come and destroy their village and crops. Then they barely survive to make it to the next year to come to Maine to work picking apples or to Florida to cut sugarcane.

After payday, they go right back to work the next morning. It is now time to pick the apples. The crates are already waiting in the fields and the ladders are placed by each tree. They climb the ladder and pick the bright red apples and put them in a pouch ever so carefully as not to bruise the apples. They do this all day long, not stopping for lunch. They each have a jug of cold water with them. They eat and drink as they go. At night they put the crates onto a flatbed and the apples are moved to the storage barn. Here the apples are graded and waxed and prepared for shipment and

storage for the winter. The storage barn is very chilly to protect the apples. The Jamaicans usually do not pack the apples, local women are hired to do that. There are so many apples that the women work for months after the harvest just grading and packing the apples.

By the end of October, the Jamaicans are ready to leave for home. Each man has a crate that weighs 500 pounds to pack all his belongings in for the trip home. TV's, VCR's, radios, motorcycles, bicycles, food and sometimes a small car or car parts, clothes, or you name it, is what they pack to take home with them. And of course, the gifts for their children. When they arrive home, it is time to work hard to get ready for their planting season. They try to make what money they can to survive on until they can make the trip again, to the cold state of Maine, far from home, for the Douglass Hill Apple Harvest in Sebago, Maine.

My name is JoAnne Merritt. I live in East Sebago with my husband Ken and daughter Krystina. I am expecting a baby in June. I've worked at the American Tool Co. for two years, mainly in the router bit department. My hobbies include hiking, camping, hunting and crafts.

Thanh Thi is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

An Impression

Thanh Thi Nguyen

One night in March 19, 1991 I got to the Portland airport. Many people picked up my family. I had an American sponsor and he took us to his house in Cumberland. We lived there for a week and he explained about the life, customs, culture of the U.S. to us. He is a kind person, has a nice heart. He made for us a social security card, identification card, helped us move and he taught me to cook American food. Time in the United States is ahead 18 hours from the Philippines, in the U.S. daytime was night time in the Philippines. Therefore in the night time he has already slept and we ate. In the morning he got up, made lunch for us but we slept well, so quiet outside and snow was falling. A few houses not identical to my country, houses are closer to houses, they are crowded. I walked on the street and I saw Americans. I was afraid. If they talked to me I couldn't speak English well. I was lazy to go to school at night time. I walked 20 minutes every morning to work. It was so cold sometimes the strong wind I almost flew.

About My Vacation In Canada

Ahmad Jawad Muti

On Saturday at 11 AM I drove my two brothers and friend from Portland toward Canada. We drove through Vermont and we entered Canada.

When we entered Canada we noted the people were speaking French. We stopped at a McDonald's to get some food. The people in McDonald's couldn't speak English. Fortunately, there was a person who could speak English. He helped us to order our meals and it was a big surprise for us that the people in McDonald's couldn't speak English.

After we finished out food, we drove through Montreal. We reached Montreal at 7 PM. We spent the night at a motel. Montreal was a clean and beautiful city and Montreal is also a French community. The next day, at 10 AM, we drove toward Niagara Falls. During our trip we saw many cities- one of these was Toronto. It was very beautiful with two million people. The people were speaking English in restaurants and hotels. We didn't have any problems. Finally we reached Niagara Falls. Although Niagara city was very small, the falls were very beautiful. Our trip was very pleasant and we enjoyed it very much.

Ahmad Jawad is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

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Vincent Taban Paul is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

War is Bad

Vincent Taban Paul

My name is Vincent Taban. I came from Sudan in 1984, to Portland, Maine because of the war in my country. In Sudan, the military government was killing the civilians and forcing people in the religion Islam, without the choice of everybody. They were using force to Islamize everybody. We were arrested by the security for no reason, just suspicion laid on us. My wife, sister, my son, all of us were arrested.

They thought that we were collaborating with the rebels in the bush and they separated me from my family. They took them to a different place, from there I was beaten badly and tortured. They wanted me to tell them about the rebel activities, meanwhile I am innocent about the story. I know nothing about the movement. Then I found a way to escape from the detention because life became hard for me, no food to eat, no medical treatment and some of my jail mates died of hunger. Every morning they beat me.

GOD really helped me when I was coming out from that bad place. I am now in a safe place with all my family. I take care of them. Let us join hands together for the development of our future to come. I thank the U.S.A. people for their sympathy on us.

My Grandmother

Zeljka Rakovic

My father's mother was named MARIA and I called her Baka. I remember my grandmother and her baking a cake that she liked. She and I sat and drank milk and ate this sweet cake. When I was a small girl, I played in my yard with my friends. My grandmother surprised us with sweet cake for all my friends. After we ate the cake and drank our milk we went into the yard again. When I was 12 years old my grandmother was very sick. She was sick for five years. She had difficulty walking. After five years of being sick, she died. I was very sad because of the death of my grandmother. She loved me very much and I loved her.

My Life

Zeljka Rakovic

My name is Zeljka Rakovic. I am from Yugoslavia. I lived in Visoko city near Sarajevo. I am married. I have two children, a boy, and a girl, Jovana. I have lived in Portland one year. The reason why I came to America was the war in my country. Now, my job is at Barber Foods. I am a line worker on the line seven months. When I lived in Visoko I had a big house. Behind my house was a big garden. The garden had different flowers and colors. In my house were always fresh flowers.

Zeljka is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

Tuyen is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Homeless and Not Enough

Tuyen Nguyen

The young man lived with his first family - his father, mother, brother and sister.

Suddenly war came to the country of the young man. All the old of the families became Soldiers to help their Country.

The mother and young man moved out to the battle zone. The war lasted a long time more.

The government didn't help with food and medicine. The mother got sick and died and the young man walked in the street begging for food.

He ate what the people gave him.

He didn't have a family.

He was alone. He didn't have a home. Everyday he slept in the street.

He thought about when he had a family and when he was happy. But now he was very sad.

I was born in Elmhurst, Illinois and raised in southern California. I met my husband in Barstow, California while I was in the USO. After my husband's discharge from the Marine Corps we returned to his home in South Portland, Maine. We now live in Buxton, Maine where we have raised our three children. Besides writing, I enjoy cross-country skiing, playing darts and traveling. I love to read murder mysteries and romance novels. I look forward to my next computer writing class so I may complete my story about a stray dog that brings her new family together.

Shady Lady

Pat Smith

It was a hot, sultry day when it happened. Scottie, my best friend, died.

I remember holding his cold, stiff body wrapped in the old bed linen Mom gave me. My step-father was digging the shallow grave behind the house, under the shady tree we always sat under on days like today.

"You wouldn't be dead, Scottie, if they didn't make me go. Heck, who needs summer school, I can read good enough, Jeff thought. He gently lowered the body of the beloved little terrier into his final resting place. If I were here you wouldn't of run out to look for me".

"I'm sorry boy, it's all my fault," Jeff sobbed, as the lump in his throat threatened to choke him.

"You go on now Jeff, I'll take care of Scottie," Jeff's step-father stated.

"He's my dog, not yours!" Jeff yelled. "If you didn't make me go to summer school, Scottie wouldn't have run out like that! The car wouldn't have hit him. You didn't love him like I did, you didn't care, you never cared for him or me!"

With a shocked look on his face, Jeff's step-father slowly shook his head and said, "That's not true Jeff and you know it. I love you and your mother very much. As far as loving Scottie, well..... he was a good dog and I'm going to miss him too. No one intentionally opened the door for him to run out like that."

"Yeah, well if I were here, it wouldn't have happened." Jeff sobbed.

"There's no way of knowing if that were so. Scottie's time was up," Jeff's step-father stated.

Listening to the soft plops of soil being shoveled on his beloved pet. Trying to swallow the lump forming in his throat, as the silent tears slid down Jeff's cheeks. The feeling of emptiness and loneliness wrapped around him like the morning mist. Wishing Scottie would be alive. Watching for a sudden movement, that would never happen. Closing his eyes to the pain, Jeff turned and walked away.

Harry smoothed the dirt over the grave, then gently patted it with the shovel. Barbara, Jeff's mother, came out the back door of the garage, carrying a wooden bucket, half filled with soil and a flat of flowers. She called to Jeff and received no response. As she got closer to Scottie's grave, Harry leaned the shovel against the tree, took the bucket and flowers from his wife and said quietly, "Jeff's really upset. I think he blames me for the accident."

"Don't feel that way, how were you to know Scottie would run out like that? Once Jeff accepts Scotties death, he'll see things more clearly. It's just really hard for him right now, that's all," Barbara said, looking up at her husband.

Barbara then got down on her knees, reached for the bucket, and set it on its side, spilling out the dirt over Scottie's grave. She then planted the multi-colored flowers in the bucket and over the grave.

"There, how's that look?" Barbara questioned. "Now this spot will always be beautiful for Jeff. I just couldn't bear to have Jeff look out his window and see just a

mound of earth where his pet was laid to rest." Barbara talked aloud as she looked up towards her son's bedroom window, while dusting the dirt from her gloved hands.

"You amaze me Barbara," Harry stated, "you always have a way to make something beautiful out of something bad."

"Well, that's what I do best," she replied, as she leaned to kiss her husband's cheek. "Come on, I have some coffee all ready made for us in the kitchen," Barbara stated, as she took her husband's hand, they walked back into the house.

As they sat sipping their coffee they heard movements coming from Jeff's room. Harry looked up at his wife as she refilled his coffee cup. He asked, "what do you think about getting Jeff another dog?"

"Oh, I think that would be nice, but don't you think Jeff should have some time to get over Scottie first?" Barbara questioned.

"Yes, I suppose so, but maybe later we can ask him about it," Harry said.

"I think we should wait a couple of weeks before we approach Jeff about it. You don't replace a family pet like you would a pair of old shoes," Barbara replied.

"You're right of course. I'm just so frustrated. No matter what I do, Jeff seems to think I'm trying to replace his dad. I know I can't replace him, I just want to be there for him, especially now. If only he would let me," Harry stated.

"I know its been hard on you, Harry, but Scottie was just a pup when Tom died, and that pup was Jeff's last link to his father. Just give it some time, Harry. Try to have patience with Jeff, he'll come around. He's a good boy and you're such a loving man, I know everything will work out. I love you both and we can be a family if we don't give up."

"You're right Barbara." Harry said, "I'll keep trying," as he reached for his wife's hand, raised it to his lips and kissed it softly.

All the while, Jeff sat at his bedroom window staring out at Scottie's grave. Looking down at the bucket of flowers spilling over it. Remembering all the romps they took to their favorite fishing hole and how Scottie would pounce on the fish when it was pulled ashore. Remembering the times they would run through the open fields of high grass. Oh, how Scottie would bound through the grass and never leave his side. Jeff lowered his head and rested it on his arm, then cried softly, "oh Scottie I'm sorry." Getting up from his desk, he walked over to his bed, burying his face into the pillow and cried himself to sleep.

The next morning Barbara called Jeff to breakfast. With a great moan, Jeff rolled over, rubbed his blurry eyes and called out, "coming!"

Automatically he patted the bed expecting Scottie to jump up and have their morning tug-o-war game, when he remembered why his eyes burned so badly.

Man, Jeff thought, *they ruined everything with summer school and now I lost Scottie. What more do they want from me? I know what I'll do. I'll skip school, they can't make me go.*

Jeff then dashed about to get dressed and made his way down to the kitchen for breakfast of pancakes and juice. After gulping down his food, he grabbed the lunch on the counter and dashed out the door for his bike and was padding towards his favorite fishing hole. He knew his fishing pole would be where he left it, all he would have to do is dig up a few worms.

As he laid on the sun-warmed grass, watching the white fluffy clouds overhead, Jeff recalled days when Scottie would lie beside him. He recalled when Scottie would wait for the first catfish to hit the shore. Oh, Jeff would laugh when the dog would pounce on it.

"Atta boy, get him!" Jeff would

holler to him.

At that moment, the fishing rod bobbed and Jeff pulled in a nice fat catfish. Jeff watched the fish flop around until he realized it wasn't moving any longer. As the fish gulped in air, lost all strength, Jeff grabbed it behind the gills and removed the hook. With great care he returned the fish to the creek.

Fishing didn't hold the enjoyment anymore. Jeff decided it was about time to return. He took his fishing pole and was putting it where he always stashed it when he heard a strange noise coming from the rotting log to his left. Cautiously, he approached the noise. Looking over the log, he spotted a weird gray and black splotched dog; cut, bloody, and begging for Jeff's help. Jeff didn't know what to do when the dog whined again.

"It's okay, boy," he stated as he gently ran his hand down the side of the dog. "I'll be right back with some help." Jumping up and running for his bike, Jeff headed home.

Peddling hard and fast, Jeff felt his lungs burn and a sharp pain in his side. He wanted to stop, but couldn't, that dog needed him. Gasping for air, he peddled on with determination, finally arriving home. Jeff jumped off his bike, letting it fly to god knows where, as he ran into the house screaming, "Mom! Mom! Come quick!"

At the sound of Jeff's panic-strained voice, Barbara dropped her laundry basket and dashed for the stairs, flew to the kitchen door from the cellar.

"Jeff!, what's wrong? Are you hurt?" Barbara questioned.

"Mom, come quick, he's hurt!" Jeff stammered.

"Who's hurt?" Barbara asked again, "start from the beginning."

"I skipped school and went fishing instead. I found him all cut up and bloody," Jeff stated.

"My God, Jeff, who did you find and where?" Barbara asked.

"A dog mom, the poor thing. We gotta do something for him," Jeff stated.

Placing her hand upon her chest and breathing a sigh of relief, Barbara stated, "calm down Jeff, now get an old blanket and my first aid kit. I'll get a container of water and meet you in the car. We can get there by car can't we?" Barbara asked.

"Yes, it's over by the abandoned farm house on County Road, you know the creek that runs through the field, just north of the farm house!" Jeff loaded the blanket, first aid kit and water container into the back section of his mother's old station wagon.

"The old McPherson place on Route 4?" his mother questioned.

"I guess so," Jeff stated, "it's just an old farm house. I never got close enough to read the mailbox, I just cut through the field. Dad said the owner wouldn't mind if I stayed away from the house. So, I only cut across the field to get to the creek."

"Is your secret place just around the bend from the bridge at County Road and South Fork Road by any chance?" Barbara asked.

"Yeah, how did you know?" Jeff questioned, as they climbed into the front seat of the car.

"Your dad and me use to meet there after school. I guess it's both of our favorite spots to fish for the big catfish, huh?" Barbara stated as she winked at her son. Starting the car they drove toward the bridge.

Jeff asked, "Did you and dad go there a lot?"

"Yes, you see your dad and me lived close to each other. I lived with my parents in the house we live in now. Your dad lived with Mr. McPherson after his mom and dad died in the car crash," Barbara explained as she drove the short distance to the bridge that crossed the creek.

"What happened to Mr. McPherson?" Jeff asked.

"He died a short time before your dad did. Mr. McPherson left everything he ever owned to your dad. He never said why he let the place fall to ruin, and I never asked. I guess it's because he always looked so sad when he spoke of the old man. Well here we are, which way now?" Barbara asked.

"Park over there, mom." Jeff stated as he pointed out a turn off, just before the bridge.

Throwing the car into park, turning off the engine, Barbara climbed out of the car as Jeff ran ahead of her. As he approached, she was pulled back to the time when she wore pigtails and overalls. She could almost hear Tom calling out, "come on scaredy cat!" Smiling at the sweet memory she walked on through the dense undergrowth as the mud oozed through her open-toed shoes and the pricker bushes snuggled at her skin.

There behind the log where her sweet Tom first kissed her, lay a whimpering, bloody bag of bones.

"It's alright boy!" Jeff said softly as the dog tried to raise it's head, "this is my mom boy, she'll make you feel better." Jeff repeated as he gently petted the dog's head. "See mom, the poor thing needs us."

"Well Jeff, it certainly looks bad. Now I'll try all I can. Then it's up to the vet, but don't you get your hopes up too high, you hear?" his mother answered.

"I won't mom. But we gotta do something. The poor thing is hurting," Jeff said.

After a few moments of checking for serious wounds, Jeff's mom washed away the blood to find deep scratches and scrapes. Then giving the dog sips of water by dripping it into its mouth from the end of the cloth until the dog could drink from her hand. When the dog was satisfied, it lowered its head and closed its eyes.

"Now Jeff, we have to slide the blanket below the girl."

"It's a girl? All this time I've been calling her boy," Jeff stated.

"I don't think she'll mind, will ya girl?" Barbara answered as she ran her hand over the stray's coat.

With the blanket in place, Barbara instructed Jeff to lift with her. "Okay Jeff, on three we'll lift the blanket and head for the car. I left the back open so we should be able to get her in with no problem. You just climb in with your end when we get to the car," Barbara instructed. "One, two, three... lift ..... that's it sweetheart. We're being as gentle as we can girl," Barbara spoke to calm the dog and her son. They made slow progress as they slipped through the moss-dampened ground. The dog's whimpers were louder as they approached the car.

"We're sorry girl, we're almost there," Jeff said softly to the panicky dog. At last, mud covered but happy that they finally made it to the car, Jeff slowly climbed into the back of the car and cradled the dog on his lap. Placing the blanket over the injured animal, closing the back car door and getting into the driver's seat. Barbara started the engine and turned toward the town.

To be continued . . .

A Problem at Home

Tesfay Desta

I am from Ethiopia. I came to the United States Nov. 20, 1991. I study at Barber Foods. I've worked at Barber Foods for 4 years.

My name is Tesfay Desta. Today my daughter has an appointment at Maine Medical Center. So, I am going to Maine Medical Center with my daughter at 2:30 P.M. After we are finished at Maine Medical Center, I will come to my job at Barber Foods. Last week, Thursday, I did not come to school. There was a problem in my home. My home is on the third floor and from the second floor came up a fire. My wife and my children got outside. They did not hold clothes, did not use shoes, they ran outside. I was not with them I was at work. When I got to my home the fire department came to my home. I was sad first because my children and my wife were in the house. After I saw them I was happy.

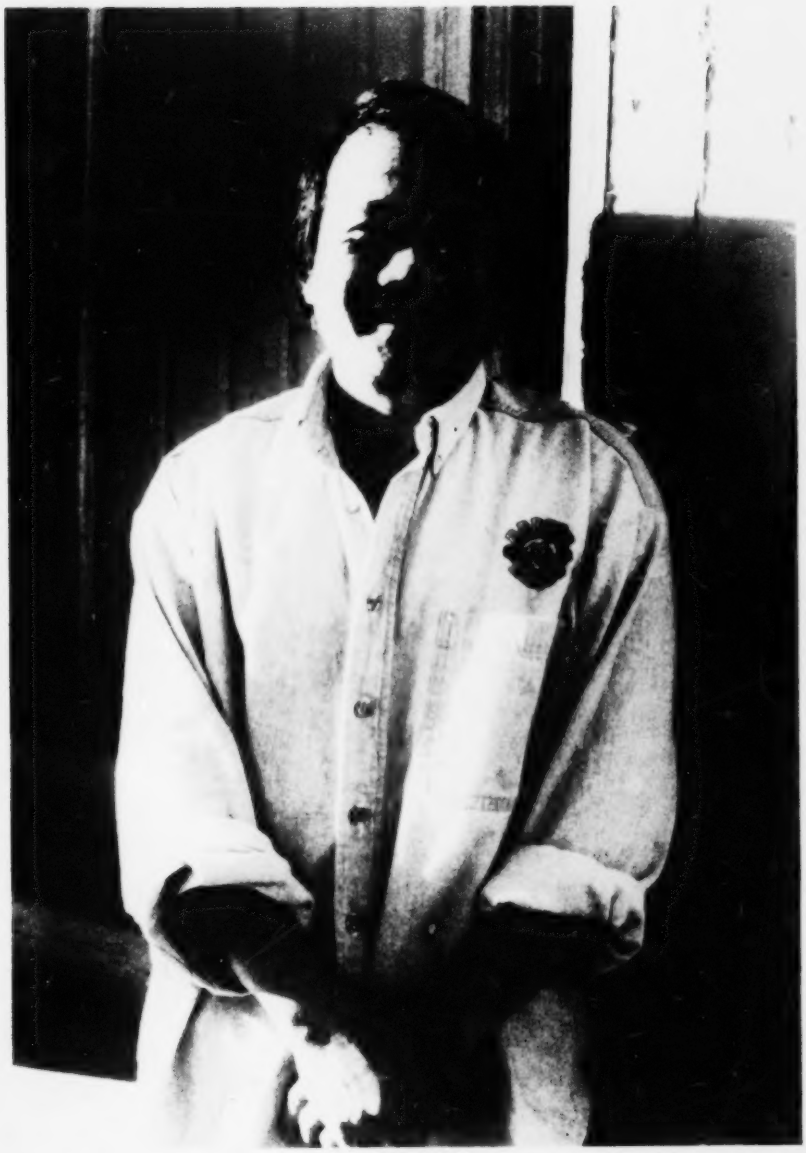
A Red Fire Summer

Duc Ho

In 1972, free Vietnam and communist Vietnam battled a lot and people died. I remember exactly, May 12, 1972. We went from camp Batri of Kein Hoa to Mynhon town of camp Batri. We had a lieutenant who was an Army leader of the camp, and a captain, and two Americans, 1,000 soldiers and me. I always followed the lieutenant and the two Americans. I checked up for them when they were sick, because I was a nurse of that Army.

There were 17 GMC cars, two jeeps followed the soldiers in the battle. The lieutenant, two Americans, a driver, a telephone person, sat together in the jeep. A captain, a driver, a translator and I sat together in another jeep, and 1,000 soldiers sat in 17 GMC cars.

Then on May 17, 1972 we came back to camp. I heard a sound too loud when the mine opened the ground. I saw a jeep upside down and when I came I saw an American had too much blood, when I touched his wrist, I knew he'll die. Another American, his nose had too much blood. I used my mouth and took the blood out. After that an airplane came and took them to the hospital. After that, in 1973 I saw the lieutenant again. He was very well but he couldn't stand. He could only lie down and I asked about the two Americans. He said one American died in the airplane and one American left the hospital sick and he came back to his country.



I'm Duc Ho. I'm from Vietnam. I've lived in Maine for five years. I appreciate the government of America for helping my family come to America. Now, I presently work at Barber Foods for around three years. I like my job very much. I thank you for helping me learn more English. I think English is a key to open for my bright future. I'll try to learn and improve my English when I've a chance. Now, I'm a set-up machine operator on second shift.

Poetry Collection

Anonymous

Facts cold and hard

Body counts on the rise

Oklahoma City or was it somewhere on
the other side of our globe

Humanity what is it worth (more here or
there)

Compassion taps into the vastness of
humanity

Do the souls of this world
Listen to the anguish

Fearless to open up
to the world force EBB
and flow of good and evil

Listen, Listen, Feel, Feel
It is there; It is the
Ache Deep within
Empty yet overwhelming

Bullfight.
traditional, strength.
running, lunging, living
one victor, one loser
cruelty, teasing, suffering.
Lingering, hovering,
separate
Death

Night.
darkness emptiness
secretive, hidden, stealth
fear of the unseen, the unknown
separate, unattached
integrated, connected
self

Starting Again

Violeta Dobra

I am from Albania. My country is so beautiful. Before it was a communist country and now it is democratic. I love my country and I have to go there in January 1996. I have friends there. When I was a little girl my dream was to be a basketball player. In 1972 I started to play. After four years we won the championship for the first time. I played every day for two times a day and when I came from practice my body felt tired. This thing I did for 20 years, now I can't do exercise. I am married for 7 years, and I have twin boys. They are six years old. My husband works at Portland Glass. I am happy in the U.S.A. My life starts now and for me it is very difficult because I am not younger. I need to learn more English to find a good job.

Violeta is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

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My Work

Ratko Glisic

My name is Ratko. I work at Barber Foods. Barber Foods is a good factory. I work on the line. My supervisor is Miss Kathlin. She is a good woman. She respects people. She knows how to do a good job. I work with my friends. My job is to close meat, put stuffing on the meat, packing, box machine, pull chicken, DSI machine, cut ham, cut cheese, and make boxes. Barber Foods has good benefits. I think this is a good job for the first time of my life in America. My occupation is an electronic mechanic. I don't know how to speak English. I am a permanent worker in Barber Foods. I can repair washing machines, all kinds of motors, transformers, alternators of cars, vacuum cleaners and more. I have two sons and one daughter. My older son is 22 years old and my second son is 18 years old, and my daughter is 14 years old.

Life in a New Country

Dragica Glisic

I'm a refugee from Yugoslavia. I came to America eight months ago with my whole family. Coming to America meant saving my children's future. During these eight months we have made many achievements, especially my children who already speak English perfectly.

The older son who works at McDonald's passed the TOEFL test so he can attend USM College. The younger son is going to graduate next year from Portland High School and my youngest daughter got the scholarship to attend Catherine McAuley High School. All of us are happy to be here and we hope someday we will be citizens of America.

Ratko and Dragica are students in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

My Hair Trouble

Doris Parker

My name is Doris Parker. I work at American Tool Companies in Gorham, in the Shipping and Receiving Dept. I've been here for five and a half years. I like the challenge of my job and respect it. My partner Sherlene Davis is a very good friend and has taken the time to show me all about shipping.

I have two wonderful daughters: one who is twenty-one and the other fourteen. I'm grateful to also have my grandson, who is four years old that we adore.

I feel very fortunate to be working, that we are in good health. I thank God for all of that and for people who are making this world a better place.

Also, last but not least, I want to thank American Tool for giving us the opportunity to learn and grow and experience further in education which is a very important part of all of our lives.

When I was a little girl my mom would always be doing something with my hair. It was very thick and coal black. She would be setting it or putting it up in a bun. I remember I couldn't wait until it was over, because with the length being down to my middle of my back, it would take so long.

As I got older and began taking care of my own hair, I realized this isn't any fun at all. I had to straighten my hair many times. There were also times when I would iron my hair. I was asking myself over and over what to do? I felt I had the most frizzy hair in history. My mom even said to me, "Are you going out looking like that?"

One night I decided to change my hair to a lighter color. My daughter Lisa had put a blond lightener in her hair and the results were so wonderful, the most beautiful warm brown tones you have ever seen. I wanted to do the same.

So, as I explained this to my boyfriend, he replied, "All I ask is please don't wake me up screaming."

Well, the confident one said, "Don't worry about it."

I didn't waste any time opening those bottles and putting on them gloves. I was so excited I couldn't wait for those warm brown tones. Well, little did I know I could have waited a lifetime for the results. You couldn't believe how I felt. I looked like Bozo the clown, especially the sides of my hair that had been styled shorter so they flared out. Was I ever upset! It wasn't those nice warm brown tones I would have liked to have. It was orange!

I gave up trying to sleep. All night long I wished that I could have been some where else. I wanted to take off until I could fix this mess. However that wasn't possible because I had to give Jeff a ride to work.

In the morning, when the alarm went off, I covered my head. Jeff automatically pulled them off and began to laugh. He just couldn't stop. I replied, "Let's get you to work."

On the way he was still carrying on and I was trying to drive the car. With all of this, other drivers began taking a second look. They appeared to be saying, is this lady for real or am I half asleep? By the time I got him to work I was used to the looks I was getting.

It was too early to go to a drug store to pick up hair dye. So, I decided to go to Dixon Bros. to get oil delivered to my home. When I approached the door, two ladies were standing there. They took one look at me and began to laugh hysterically. I happened to run into not one, but two hair dressers. They both were very nice and gave me some advice.

All in all, I had one interesting experience. I met some fun people and I also got a few laughs. I figured well, since there's nothing I can do about this right now, I might as well have as much fun with this as I can and give other people a good laugh.

So, it came to my mind to go see a friend of mine at Guidi's Diner on Main street in Westbrook. She was waitressing at the time. When I got there the owner immediately said to me, "Come here dear, I think you need some help." So I went into the kitchen. He gave me some coffee and something to eat. Then he began making some phone calls. He knew a hairdresser and wanted to get some advice; all I needed was that drug store to open.

Well, now it was finally nine o'clock. I could go to the drug store. After waiting all this time, I realized I have to stand at this counter and purchase hair dye looking like this. "Oh no," I said to myself. "I can't go in there." I knew after all this what I had to do. I felt my face was as red as my hair. All I got this time was a strange look. So, I began to laugh. I learned a lesson and can say I had fun doing it. I have never tried to lighten my hair since then. I figure the only way it will lighten is on its own, in due time.

An Important Experience

Vy Thi Tuong Ho

My father has lived in the United States for ten years. He took care of me and my husband and my sister. We came to the United States from Vietnam in 1992. My father took care of me to come to the United States because he was a citizen before I got married. First, I came to Maine in the U.S. and I lived in South Portland. I and my husband lived in my father' s house for one month. After that we left Maine and went to California and we lived in Santa Ana for one month. We couldn't find any job there. So, we decided to come back to Maine. We worked many jobs such as cleaning, restaurant, etc., but every job wasn't enough money for we spent everything in our family. We tried to find another job which made it better for us. Finally, we found Barber Foods Company. Both of us worked hard. We were line workers, that was a good job. We could earn a lot of money, have insurance for health, holidays and vacation. We had enough money for our family. After that we had a first baby who was a girl. She is very cute and smart. Right now my daughter is six months old. First we worked temporary at Barber Foods for a few months and after that we became permanent workers of Barber Foods.

Vy is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Friends or Angels

Martha Blake

Friends are special gifts that bring meaning into our lives. These special people come along during painful situations that are occurring in our lives. They give us support, love and hope. Friends listen to our concerns and understand our pain. There are times we may become the listener. These times of sharing with each other help us grow and strengthen our trust and friendship.

I believe they are predestined to enter our lives. Could these be angels sent as God's messengers to help us along the path of life? Maybe they're one and the same!

The true friend will always be there, no matter how far away they move or how busy their life becomes. Others, who seem to be our friends, enter our lives and leave. In doing so they leave us with valuable lessons we can apply to other situations in the future. Still, others enter our lives who have special talents they share, that enrich us. I have had the good fortune of having many wonderful people touch my life. Truly, I have been blessed by each one of these individuals.

Life is a learning and growing experience from beginning to end. In my life I want to have many friendships. I want to experience growth, to have a thirst for learning, to share, and to be in touch with nature. I want to harvest all the beauty these experiences will bring!

I work at American Tool Companies, the Gorham, Maine divison. I've been employed there for 16 years. I enjoy country music, especially Garth Brooks, dancing, Winston Cup Racing, religion, family and friends, life and learning. I have three boys and two girls and one special granddaughter.

An Important Experience

Sophy Som

When I was a young teenager I was riding my bicycle and motorcycle. I was thinking about maybe one day I will drive the car, but I was scared. I thought it too hard to handle a wheel to control the car. And there was too many cars on the streets in the town of Boston. Then I decided to learn English, to know how to read the signs and then I can go to driving school to learn how to drive. When I went to driving school, on the first day, the teacher told me how to hold the wheel and look around before I drive. When I drove the car I was so nervous and scared to hit someone who drove up to me. Then I drove for two hours and then I liked it. So it was nothing different from a motorcycle, so I enjoyed driving. It was a lot of fun. Also, I can help my family and take good care of my children. When they need me, I will be there for them.

My name is Sophy Som. I am from Cambodia. I was born in the Batom Boung city. I was born in 1950. I have two sisters and four brothers, they're married. I have been working at Barber Foods for 1 year and 6 months.

A Journal: In the Wilds of Maine

Don Dyer

SAT. Sept 30, 1995.

Got to camp about eleven o'clock am. It was forty degrees in the camp and fifty two degrees outside. Buddy and Sharon came in about ten minutes after we got there. They visited for about fifteen or twenty minutes, then Buddy asked his wife Sharon if she was ready to go up to their camp so they could do some painting. Sharon said they would see us later. After we got everything unloaded my father and Jeffery and I went up the road to get a load of wood. Stopped to see Bob Barker's addition he is putting on his camp. We shot the breeze for awhile and then continued up the road to find some trees to cut up, we got the truck half full and then was cutting the last few pieces. I got the damn saw pinched in the log. A woodsman's nightmare. It took me about thirty minutes to get it out. When I finally got it out, that was enough for me. We saw four spruce grouse on the way back to camp. Bob McCubrey had said earlier that he heard that the Indians had shot twenty-three moose out of thirty-five they are allowed to shoot for the season. When we got back to camp, Jeffery grabbed his McDonald's cup and went down back of the camp to where the stream is to try to catch some fish in his cup. He said he had caught one.

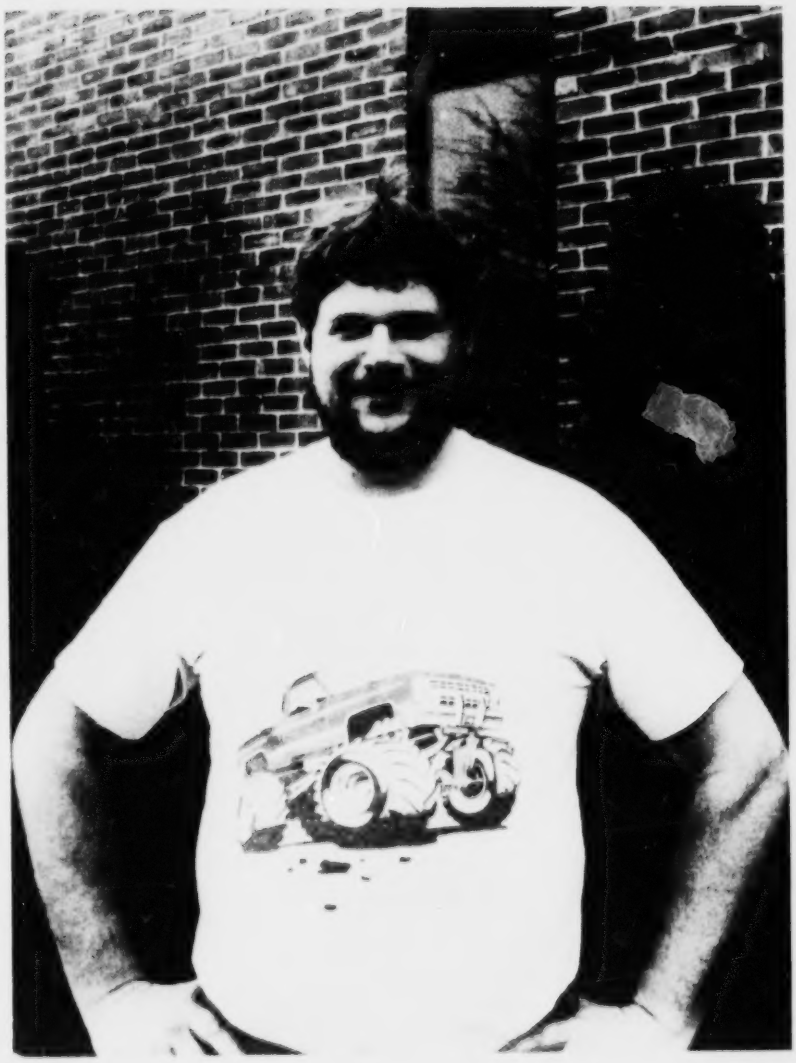
SUN. Oct 1, 1995.

Up at five-thirty, thanks to my son. The temperature outside is thirty-four degrees and fifty degrees inside. I built a small fire to take the chill off. Once the fire was going, I started cooking breakfast. When we got done with everything, it was time to get another load of wood. Went a little further up the road than we did the other day before and came across two men that were hunting moose. One of them said that he had shot one and it is just up the road. That's when he said his name is Ed Neptune. Ed is Indian. It is moose season for the Indians. I asked him if they needed help with the moose. Ed said, "Yeah." Bill and I could use some help. Off we went. While Ed was field dressing the moose, I was video taping it. It took about twenty five minutes to do that. This is interesting to me. I have never seen a moose being field dressed. We did a lot of talking with Ed and Bill. They seemed like a couple of nice guys. After that was done I started cutting some wood. When we got the truck loaded we headed down onward to camp. The temperature got up to sixty degrees. The end of another beautiful day in the wilds of Maine.

MON. Oct 2, 1995.

Up at five-thirty, again thanks to my son. If he would only do this during the school week. The temperature outside is thirty-two degrees and fifty-four degrees inside camp. When you sit on a metal stool to start a fire in the wood stove in your undershorts, it's a little bit cold on your butt; my friend. At about six o'clock that morning I am standing in the kitchen when I see these beady little black eyes looking at me. We made eye contact real hard. I didn't know who was going to draw first, me with the spatula or him making a dash behind the curtain. Then Jeffery grabbed the trap and started putting peanut butter on it. Then I reset the trap and put it on the floor and within a minute we had caught that big game animal. He had to

weigh at least one ounce and be four inches long from tip to tip. Wow!! What a monster you caught Jeffery. After all the excitement was over I started cooking breakfast. Then after that we started cleaning up to go home. We left by ten o'clock. The end of a good trip, especially for my dad. It is his first time he has been up to camp in a year. He didn't think he would ever get up again before he would die. WELL, HE DID!!!



I have been employed by American Tool Co. for sixteen years. When I am not working or shooting 3D archery, fishing, hunting and other things, I am a father of sons, Kyle who is three and Jeffery who is my ten year old. My fiancée, Pamela, and our family live at Sebago Lake.

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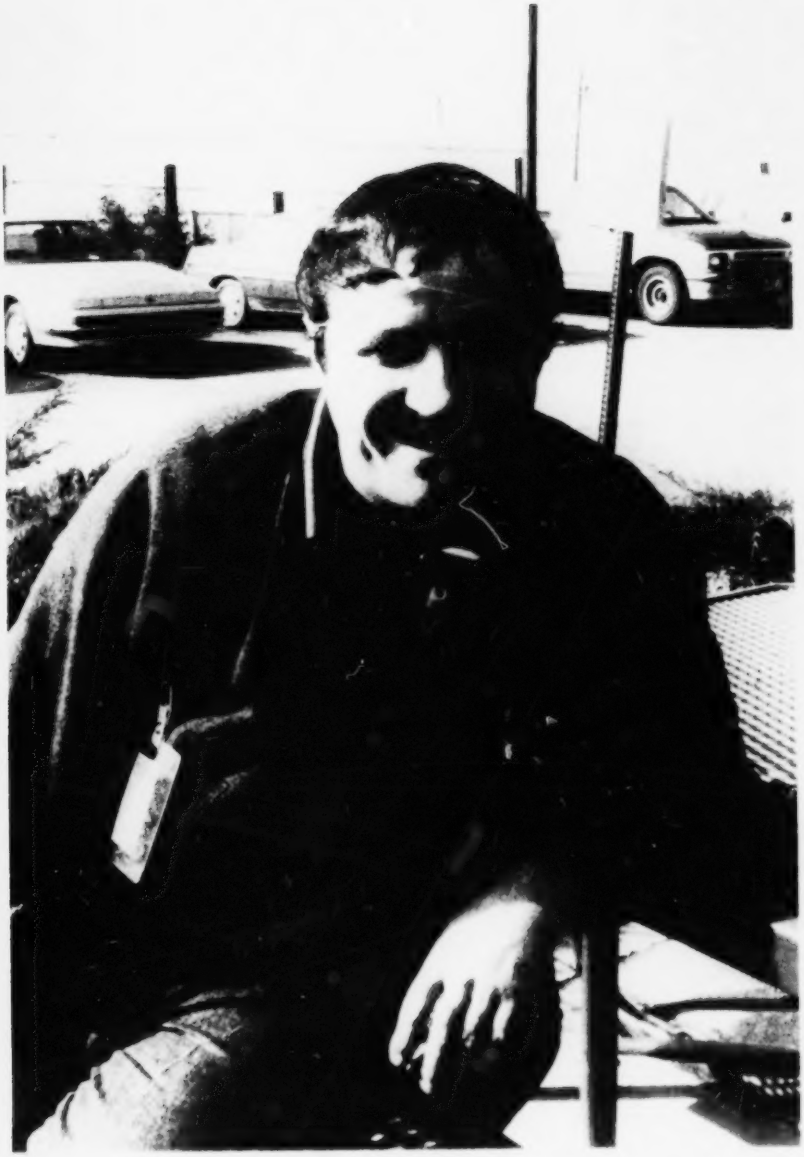
Zenica

Milovan Zekanovic

My name is Milovan Zekanovic. I married 24 years ago. Wife's name is Zoranka. I have one child. My son is 23 years old. I have two brothers, they both live in Yugoslavia. My family and I lived in Bosnia in Zenica. I had a good job and house. The war began in 1992. In Zenica more people are Muslims than Serbs. Muslim soldiers put nationalist Serbs, and me, in concentration camp for two years. Muslims did not give food to eat, I was hungry. I weighed 100 lbs. Muslim soldiers were beating my back, legs and arms. I got out in exchange for Muslim prisoners. United Nations High Commissioner for Refuges helped me for immigration to America. I have lived with my family in Portland seven months. My family and I started working in Barber Foods five months ago. My sponsor refugee resettlement helped me find a job. My family and I like our job and life in America.



My name is Milovan Zekanovic. I'm married. My wife's name is Zoranka. I have one child. My son is 23 years old. His name is Radenko. My country is Yugoslavia. I have lived with my family in Portland since 3/22/1995.

Speaking Heart

Chim Meak

I'm very impressive about my job at Mr. Barber's chicken plant. Because a lot of high-tech equipments are made to be used in the plant, also because of Mr. Barber's intelligence have made him at the top of all business in Maine.

After one month of my hiring date, I have seen a program called "Worksmart". I was wondering about this very much and I went to ask my supervisor "Excuse me sir, what is Worksmart about?" He told me, "It will teach you all about the second language technique". I immediately signed up for English as a second language in the second semester.

Now I and my other three classmates are taking an English computer class. Bo Hewey is our teacher. We discussed about our narrative story we wrote in class. We have a lot of fun, the sooner the class start, the fun begin.

I am thankful and appreciate to Mr. Barber from the bottom of my speaking heart for his understanding of our needs in English as our key to open door and our personal life.

I'm proud of myself that I can learn more English here!

Life in Japidy

Chim Meak

I was three years old. My family was living in the suburbs and also with my relatives in Cambodia.

My relatives and my family were living a decent life. Our plan for the future was expanding the grocery store. But the communist came in, took over the kingdom and took away ours and everybody else's properties when my age reached four years and two months. They also separated our family and many of the families in the nation. This is terribly stupid, because it hurt us, the youngsters. The Khmer Rouge called for all those whom had high knowledge to work for them. They manipulate these people away and murdered them. They also murdered more than three million in cold blood by starvation.

Finally we are free. But most of us have lost families and relatives. Now they're starting a new life and trying to forget everything in the past. I am very lucky because I made it through everything in the past and to the United States of America.

Chim Meak is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine. I learned a lot from Worksmart! I also advise other associates to register.

An Unforgotten Time

Marlene Marston

As I sit here sorting out my thoughts and feelings, my eyes begin to fill with tears. The tears are of sadness for what once was, and of happiness for what is to come. My friend, you and I have shared out more intimate details of our lives with one another. We were the best of friends, companions and confidants, and the worst of enemies all rolled into one. Together we cried, we laughed and joked, we fought harsh battles, and our love brought us to new heights that shattered our imaginations.

Our time together was so intense and passionate that to me, the mere scent of you was overwhelmingly intoxicating. There are no words to express the excitement I felt whenever our eyes gazed upon each other or when we held each other so closely.

Although we are no longer together, I felt it was necessary for me to thank you for all you've done for me. Too often many words are left unspoken between two people, so please bear with me, one last time. Thank you for being there for me at some of the lowest moments in my life, like when I was struggling with difficulties with my children and with my own demons. You were my emotional support. You tirelessly listened to all my deepest thoughts, feelings and fears and allowed me to express myself to you. You offered me comfort when I needed it, and advice, though I was often reluctant to listen or accept it.

Your formidable strength has taught me to seek my own inner strength when I felt confused, frustrated, and frightened at the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and challenges in my life. Thank you for your patience and your faith in me. Unfortunately for us, we have grown apart, as what often happens to people, but you have enabled me to continue growing into a better person.

Yes, I mourn what we once shared, but I am also filled with great anticipation for the future. I now know that whatever lies ahead for me needs not to be feared. I often wonder with painful heartache, if by some possibility, we might have been able to alter our inevitable fate. But now, I am prepared to go on with my life and I will always cherish our most precious moments in my heart.

You will never be far from my thoughts, for you have taught me to love so completely and freely. Finally, thank you for touching my life, for making me feel so special and able to see the world through different eyes, through the eyes of love. Never will I love again the way I've loved you, but now I know the capacity for love that has always been within me.

Thank you, my friend.

Hi! My name is Marlene Marston. I'm a single parent of three, a son 26, and twins, a boy and a girl, age 18. I have been employed at Barber Foods since July '94, currently as a crew lead. I grew up in York County and moved to Portland in '93 to attend the University of Southern Maine majoring in Criminology. My immediate goals are to continue my education and further my career with Barber Foods.

My name is Farid Muti. I am from Afghanistan. I was born on the fourth of July 1961, Independence day in U.S.A. My favorite subject is drafting. Someday I would really like to work in my own business, to be a draftsman to draft and design buildings, houses, restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals for Afghanistan, also in the U.S.A. My favorite music is Mordan Talkin, Doctor Spin, Vanessa Williams. I like walking on the beach, swimming and watching movies.

When I Left Afghanistan

Farid Muti

When I left Afghanistan with my brothers and other people, we were walking from mountain to mountain for two weeks. During the night we were walking. When we were walking, the Afghan communist government fired at us and more than ten people died. For two days we had nothing to drink or eat. We felt bad. During two weeks we traveled by walking more than 300 miles, no swimming, no shower, no clean clothes. It was a very hard trip for everyone with us.

When I arrived in Pakistan with my brothers and Freedom Fighters, we were there for three nights at a refugee camp. We were there to register with the Pakistan government. After I registered, I had an address of my friend who was with me in high school and my neighbor in Afghanistan, in the capital, Kabul. I went with my brothers to his house and his wife made lunch, dinner, and washed our clothes for one week. After one week, we found our cousins. They were living in Islamabad, the capitol of Pakistan. My friend Adbullah Durane was our guide to find our cousin. Since September 1984, until December 1991, I was living with my brother and with my cousin in Islamabad. When we went to Pakistani office for registration, the registration form and identification card price was 10 rupees= $50 and they said give to us 1000 rupees and we gave the 1000 Rs for each person.

When we came to the U.S.A. we had two Afghanistan carpets to bring with us. I went to Import & Export office in Pakistan. The clerk said, "sit down". I was sitting for half an hour. After half an hour I asked "what is happening?" and the clerk asked, "how long have you been living in Pakistan?" I said, "seven years." "You don't know about life in Pakistan." I said, "I don't know." He said, "give to me money for the presidents at Export & Import, everybody wants a share." I said, "how much do you want?" He said, "regular for one carpet 100 Rs, you have two carpets 200 Rs." I gave him two hundred rupees.
I came with my father who studied in U.S.A. and my mother, sister, and four brothers on December 1991 in the U.S.A., Portland, Maine. Now we are happy with life in the U.S.A.

My father, who studied in the U.S.A. applied at the U.S.A. embassy in Pakistan. After an interview with the United States Department of Justice and Immigration the Naturalization service helped and bought my whole family airplane tickets. They told us, when you and the other refugee people get to U.S.A. you and the other refugees give us back the money for the tickets. And we gave back all the dollars, more than 7,000 dollars.

"Thank you again to the U.S. government for helping us and everybody who helped our family."

I was born in 1968 in Battombong, Cambodia
I have been in the U.S. for 12 years now

SO

My Life Journal

Chandy Vann

My name is Chandy Vann and I am from Cambodia. Now I'm living in the state of Maine in the U.S. I lived in New York City for a year and then I moved to Maine in 1984.

During my first time in the U.S. I didn't even speak English at all. But I have a sponsor to help my family out during that year. Me and my sister went to school and we learned English and math, also American History too. We are so glad that we learned about U.S. history because it helps us understand how America first became. Also, we understand the law too.

And now since we graduate from high school we now speak English very well too. It was very tough at first, later it became easy for us.

In 1989, I went to hair design school for two years and I graduated in 1991. Now I plan to have my own salon someday soon. That was my dream since I was a little girl. I hope my dream will come true. Despite all this new adopted country and family, I still miss my family back home in Cambodia. But even though I'm not a American citizen now, someday I will be one.

I think America is a wonderful country because the American people are wonderful and their government always figures out the way to solve a problem when they are in a bad situation. Someday when I go back home to Cambodia, I hope my people are as wonderful as Americans too.

I would like to thank all the people that have been helping me throughout the years and teaching me all kinds of new things that I never known before. Thank you all.

Ly Ly is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

An Important Experience

Ly Ly Ho

I am Ly Ly Ho. I am from Vietnam and I speak Vietnamese. I came to America on May 13, 1993 because my husband is Amerasian. First time I came to the city of Portland, Maine, I was scared about how to speak English because it is not my language. Some friends told me if I can't speak English I can't get a job. I worried about a job but after two days I went to BEST employer, the first time I didn't know how to write the application. I have a friend, he came nine months before me, he helped me. After three days I came to work in Barber Foods for temporary and after three months, I worked full time at Barber Foods. Now I have a better job but I want to learn more English because I want to have a new job at Barber Foods. I would like to say thank you very much for teachers and Mr. Barber who help me go to school to learn more English. Thank you very much to Barber Foods Company that helps me have a job.

Legend of the Princess Tower

Zhanna Dzabiev

The legend began as in 1300's there was a king Ismael who lived in the city of Baku, Azerbajan which was surrounded by the Caspian sea. Ismael just lost his wife that he loved very much. She died giving birth to their only little girl. Forty days and nights he cried without stopping, he was going crazy. Every time he looked at her there was his wife.

Years went by, but he still was thinking of his wife. The only thing that gave him happiness was his daughter who looked just like her mother. She looked like her mother so bad that he fell in love with his own daughter. When she would sleep he would come in her room and stare at her for hours without taking his eyes off her. He fell madly in love with her. He lost his mind, he didn't care that he was her father. She loved one of the servant boys, he was poor so she knew that they could never get married and she couldn't even tell her father.

Couple of years later Ismael got older and crazier and he told her that he wants to get married. She told him that it wasn't possible because she was his daughter and that she didn't love him that way. No one could say anything to him because he was the king. She was afraid of him and she hated him. Finally she said okay that she will marry him. She didn't know what else to do. If she run away with her real love her father will find her. She had one way out she had to kill herself.

So she said the only way she would marry him if he built her a tower in the middle of the sea and the biggest in the city. He agreed. He hired the best architects so the tower would be one of the best. Ismael killed them after they built it so they wouldn't be able to make something better. After the tower was done the princess and her lover had a date to meet at noon on the top of the tower. When they got there the princess told her lover that she loved him and will only love him; they knew that they could never be together. They decided that the only way they would be together is if they jump from the top of the tower. So they jumped off into the sea and died. Since this day the legend and the tower is in Baku. After the tragedy the tower was called "Princess Tower".

Tourists from all over the world come to see the tower to know the old legend. This tower symbols love and faith.

My name is Zhanna Dzabiev. I have been in the United States almost five years. I took a class in reading and writing and think the class really helped me improve my reading and writing

Thanh Thi is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine. The program at Barber Foods is called 'Worksmart'

An Important Experience

Thanh Thi Nguyen

Two years and four months ago I came to the United States. Everything was new and different with me and my country. First time I didn't know everything in the United States. It was so new and very hard for me. I worried about how I would find out and get a job and then the government of Maine helped me find a job at Barber Foods. The first day I came to work I didn't know what I can do somebody showed me. Now I'm still working there and take Worksmart at Barber Foods. I have a better job now. My English is still poor. I want to study more, then someday I will have a new job. English will help me get a new job and it will be easy working. English and a good job were very important the first time I came to the United States of America. I would like to say thank you very much to all teachers teaching at Barber Foods. They help us learn better ESL.

I came from a family of 6 children that has always lived in Maine. I've been working at American Tool for 3 years. I enjoy taking these classes that my company really encourages us to take because they really help with the learning of your job.

The Joys of Owning a Home

Carol Conant

It was an early Thursday morning at about 4:45 a.m. that annoying alarm clock went off again. I don't understand why we as humans let that darn thing run our life like it does. Getting up, eating, making lunch, brushing my teeth, letting the dog out, warming up the car, getting the dog in the house are just a few things I do before my trip to earn a paycheck. By the end of the week, I am so happy that I got a check that I don't even think of that darn alarm clock.

I have been working on my shed everyday as soon as I get out of work until it gets dark outside for about three weeks now. I am really getting tired from all the hard work that I have been doing. I could really use a vacation right now.

My day started a little rough trying to get up. When I left for my computer class, it was a little chilly outside with frost all over the windows of my car. When I got to class, I was very upset to find out I no longer had a disk. How was I going to do anything in class? Mad with myself, I went to my car to see if it had fallen out onto the floor. While searching, I found a toy car that was my nephews, and a window scraper, but no disk. Ashamed, I returned with no disk for class. My teacher was understanding and let me use another one without saving my work on it. Come to find out, I had forgotten it in the computer the week before.

I decided to take the next day off so I can work on another home project. The weather was in the low 70's, and that's the kind of weather I need to work outside. I don't believe that we were going to get too many more of these warm days now that it is the middle of the fall.

My home project this time will be to put clapboards on the shed and the garage with at least a coat of primer to protect it from the winter weather. So far my husband Kevin, my Mom, and I have gotten the shed completed with a coat of primer and a coat of finishing paint. I stood back and looked at the shed and I was so filled with pride that it looked more like vinyl siding on the house now. What a good feeling. Anyway the shed will have to wait until next year to get another coat of paint and a new roof, only due to the lack of time. Tomorrow we will work on the garage putting clapboards on, and hopefully a coat of primer on it also before the winter.

We got as far as doing it all except one side where I tried to put my old front door to the house, on the side of my garage. I got the frame up and the door would not go in. Why won't it fit the measurements are correct? I got so frustrated I wanted to burn it down. I gave up before I started to cry from all the hard work, being overtired, and knowing that it won't be completed today. *When will I get another nice day to complete it?* I got up the nerve to call my cousin Peter to come over and help me. He showed up that night and worked on it with his brother Joe and Kevin. But the garage was still not completed. Peter said that he would come in a few days to help finish it. Two days past, and then a week went by and still no Peter. I was angry that he didn't show up, but the time away from my project was nice. A little over a week past and finally Peter showed up again to help complete the door.

When he left, Kevin and I put the finishing touches on it so the following day we would only have to deal with putting on the clapboards.

My mom has been a great help with all the painting that she has done to keep up with us putting on the clapboards. I pray to god that we didn't take on too much this fall and get discouraged and not complete it before it is too late. I would be very excited if we do get it all done on the account that my sister Brenda is coming up from Florida this year for Christmas with her boyfriend Vincent. They have been going together for about six years now, and she hopes to marry him some day. He keeps her on the waiting limb until he graduates from college in another year. I think he wants her and only her but with school right now he can't make that kind of commitment.

Now two weeks have past the garage is completed with a coat of primer and three sides have a coat of finish paint. We were all very happy that we are done for the winter and so it's time to celebrate. Saturday night we went out to eat at a nice restaurant. We treated my mom because she helped us a great deal and we appreciate it immensely. I let her pick where we would go to eat. She decided that the Olive Garden would be the one. We went to L.L.Bean first to pick up a couple of things for her trip to Ohio tomorrow, to see her first granddaughter, that was born recently. Then we went to eat at the Olive Garden. We had to wait fortyfive minutes but it was well worth the wait. We all enjoyed ourselves very much.

We probably could have had our garage and shed all accomplished this summer. But the weather was too beautiful to be working outside in the heat when you had to spend all day working in a factory that has temperatures reach 85 to 100 plus degrees. In the summer heat all you want to do is use your riding lawnmower to get the outside chores done so you can go to your uncle's camp and cool off in the pond and play card games with your cousins that show up to visit their parents.

Buying a home for the first time is exciting. But little did we realize that there would be so much work to keep up with. When moving in we saw all the damage that people hid behind the pictures on the walls and other things that need repairs that you overlooked when picking out the house.

When buying our house two years ago, Kevin and I thought that the house didn't need any repairs for a while. Little did we know that after the first year we would have someone come and put in new windows, doors, and put vinyl siding on. At the same time Kevin and a friend worked outside in the winter weather to rebuild the dog house (bulkhead) and fix part of the outside wall to the house and part of the foundation where the dog house was because it rotted. On the other hand my dad, my brother Bob and I rebuilt the entire bathroom. We put in a new shower/tub unit, a new vanity sink, medicine cabinet, light fixture, rebuilt the floor, walls and ceiling. In doing this we needed to remove the toilet in order to remove the old floor and tub. We ended up going a whole week without a toilet. Can you just imagine? We also went without a tub for almost two weeks. After working all day we would go home to work on the bathroom until eight then go to relatives house to clean up for the night.

We have already repainted the living room, hall way, and the cellar stairway, sanded two bedroom floors with a hand sander and put a gallon of polyurethane on each floor. What a difference it made! I went on to paint the woodwork in one bedroom. I took off the paneling in the other bedroom, and fixed the shelves in the closet. When that was done, I painted that

room also.

Sometime in the future, I would like to paint my bedroom, change the linoleum that covers the kitchen and hallway, change the counter top and get rid of the gross wallpaper in the kitchen, and the rug in the living room. I enjoy doing these projects and they give me great pride in what I do and where I live. Sometimes I think that I should have bought a new house. Then I think if I did buy a new house I would have nothing to do. So then I found another project to do. This next one will be to refinish the garage and shed so that it will look like a house.

I always thank God that we have good paying jobs to be able to afford owning a house. So when that annoying alarm clock goes off so early in the morning I need to remind myself what I am really doing this for, and that is my family, and my home.

The Great Outdoors

Donald Strout

t's great to be out in the great outdoors!

Camping and fishing are my favorite things to relax. It's great to get away from city life. When you get to sleep under the stars you can't get enough of the outdoor life and fishing. The challenge is outstanding. This is life at its fullest.

The great outdoors.

I was born in Lewiston, Maine 1953, April 28. I like fishing and camping. I like playing the guitar. Music is always number one on my list. I play tennis in the summer and go hiking.

Ted McCorrison is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

Ocean Station Charley North Atlantic Weather Patrol

Ted McCorrison

It was late December 1963 on the USCG Cutter Bartaria, an old seaplane tender 3-11 class from W.W.II. The ship was somewhere in the North Atlantic, in the grid called "Charlie". The weather was about as bad as it could be. The wind was blowing 70 to 90 knots. The seas were running 65 to 90 feet along with this we had snow and freezing rain. The temperature was 28 to 32 degrees. **No place to be in the winter time.**

The ship was taking 35 to 47 degree rolls each way. The waves were breaking over the 01 and the 02 deck most of the time and over the 03 and 04 deck once in a while. One wave took out the Nancy light 3/4 of the way up the main mast. No one was allowed on the weather decks except the bosunmate of the watch. This weather lasted from Christmas through New Year's.

The seas and wind dropped off quite a bit. The seas running about 15 to 25 feet and the wind was down to about 10 knots. It was the second day of the new year when a SOS came from a supertanker. About 100 miles north of where the Titanic went down. She was taking on water and had major cracks amidship. She was about 40 miles from the Bartaria's position. About 4 hours steaming time in this kind of weather. The time was about 04 hundred, four o'clock in the morning. The Bartaria changes course to intercept the tanker. After two hours running time, the Bartaria picks up the tanker on the radar about twenty miles away. Both ships have been in radio contact since the SOS. The tanker was taking on more water and the crack amidships was getting larger. About one and one half hours go by, the lookout on the Bartaria, calls down to the bridge, I have her visually. Bearing twenty degrees off the starboard bow, about five miles. The captain of the tanker radios that he is shutting down all power and the main engine, and preparing to abandon ship. Meanwhile, the two ships are about 100 yards apart. There was a loud noise, sounded like shotgun going off in my ear. The tanker broke in half, both sections are staying afloat but slowly drifting apart. Running off the batteries, the skipper of the tanker says that all the crew are safe. Ten in the bridge section and twelve on the stern section. The way the seas were running, they had no way of lowering their life boat from the stern section and all the life rafts were washed overboard from both sections of the ship. This meant a small boat from the Bartaria would have to be lowered to pick up the crew of the tanker.

The seas were still running twenty feet and the wind was about ten to fifteen knots. This could make it real tricky lowering the life boat in this kind of weather. The crew was well trained for this kind of rescue. It would be a four man crew, the bow hook, stern hook, engineman and coxswain (helmsman). The Bartaria swung her bow into the wind and seas. The order came down from the bridge for the duty deck force: report to the boat deck. Duty boat crew stand by to man the ready life boat. With the sea painter hooked onto the

forward seat inboard, with the fenders over the side, the engine running, the life boat was lowered into the water. When the small boat was on top of the wave, the order was given to unhook the stern and bow hook, ahead slow, stand by to unhook the sea painter. When the small boat was about twenty feet away from the Bartaria, the sea painter was unhooked, and headed for the tanker. The bow man had a handheld radio, which kept us in radio contact with both ships.

After looking over the situation, it was clear that stern section was taking in more water than the bow. It was decided to pick up the men on the stern section first. Standing off about twenty yards, watching the waves break onto the deck and over the catwalk. The coxswain said we can run the boat up in the catwalk. He timed it just right, he guided the boat dead center of the catwalk. When the sea dropped out from under them, they high and dry. As the crew of the tanker came down the catwalk the coxswain said, "We can take six or eight at a time." It would take two trips anyways , so six a trip would be fine. With six on board, timing the seas, backed down off the catwalk and headed back to the Bartaria. When the small boat was about twenty yards away, the sea painter was picked up and hooked on to the seat inboard side. With the fenders out, the small boat came along side. Timing the waves just, the bow and stern hook were hooked up and the small boat was picked up and brought back to the boat deck. It was decided to use the same procedure for the next three trips. The temperature was dropping and the spray was now freezing. With the small boat back in the water, they headed back to the stern section of the tanker. Every time the bow of the boat came off the top of a wave, the spray would freeze on everything it hit. The crew and the boat was covered with ice, their face and hands, even though they were protected with foul weather gear they were still wet and cold. Colder than a witches tit, even of Cadion Club wouldn't even begin to warm you up. No matter how wet and cold they were, they still had a job to do; to get all the crew off that tanker. Coxswain thinking to himself, two more trips after this one, Christ, will we ever thaw out? Why couldn't we have pulled a Bermuda instead of a Charlie.

With all the crew from the tanker safely on board, it was time for the boat crew and the duty deck force to get things back in shipshape order. With this done, it was time to go below and get warmed up. Meanwhile, the tanker company dispatched two seagoing tugs to the scene to take the two sections in tow. The USCG stood by until this was done. It was decided that the crew of the tanker was to be taken to Argencier, Newfoundland and dropped off.

Afterword

Dear Writers,

As always, after reading the stories of students, my first response is gratitude. Thank you for sharing your joys, sorrows, disappointments, disasters, and delights with me, the reader.

The act of writing consists of many activities: thinking and feeling, collecting and connecting, selecting and shaping, showing and sharing, and finally just writing, writing, writing. Having something to say is important, but as Flannery O'Connor states: "Anyone who has lived to the age of seven, has enough to write about for life." Then why don't many of us write? We certainly have enough experiences, yet we don't put that pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard to share our experiences with others, at least not publicly. Why? Because writing is essentially about trust. Trust in oneself. Trust that our experiences, although individual, have a universal quality about them. Trust that others will listen to what we have to say and connect. Trust that others will treat our thoughts, feelings, experiences, with respect.

So I thank you again, for trusting me and others to listen to your messages of hope, to your expressions of tears, to your exclamations of joys, and your scripts of sorrow with respect and appreciation. Thank you.

Jane DiMilla

Jane has been a teacher with the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education project since September, 1995.

CASCO BAY PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION

University of Southern Maine

Writers at Work

Fall 1996

Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education

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Foreword

One indicator of success for *Writers at Work* is the response that springs forth from our readers. This comes in several forms - verbal comments, requests made for additional copies and letters of encouragement to the writers. Whenever we hear from one of our readers we are very pleased. Another measure of success is the number of stories submitted by students for publication. There are those who submit entries for each new publication; there are those who are publishing their works for the first time round. With each new and familiar submission, these authors help the Casco Bay Partnership convey to others just who we are.

In reading these stories we hope you are caught up in the same reverie and excitement that happens with students, teachers, and our whole staff, when suddenly, a new booklet of writings surfaces and comes to life. According to William Makepeace Thackeray, "the two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar, familiar things new." I leave it up to you, our reader, to discern the powers of these writers at work.

Sincerely,

Linda Evans

One of the research studies I've been involved in lately is interviewing individuals who have published their writing in 'Writers at Work'. I am looking at the impact that publishing their stories has had on students' lives.

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Dear Writers at Work,

Writing has always been a struggle for me. This may seem surprising, because, as a teacher and administrator, I have had to spend nearly every day of my life writing something to an audience of others. Although putting my thoughts into words, sentences and paragraphs on paper does not seem "natural" to me, like talking or "thinking out loud" does, I willingly bend to the task of writing. Why? Because it is important. To write one's ideas and communicate them to others, whether across the room or across the world, has been a significant achievement of humankind for the last few thousand years since our ancestors discovered the power of the written symbol. To share vital parts of ourselves through written language provides each of us a means of communicating to others who we are and what we need, yearn for, find funny, or are puzzled about. And putting our thoughts and stories to writing allows us and our thoughts and stories to live on tomorrow, two years from now, and perhaps long after we have left this Earth.

One of my strongest memories in my own education is of my writing instructor in college. He talked with me, just me, one-on-one, several times one semester. A piece of my writing always served as the focus of each meeting. He was hard on me, and I often squirmed, but I knew that he believed that I could become a better writer if I just didn't give up on myself. So even though writing is still difficult, I'm not giving up on myself. I still have something I'll want to share tomorrow and the day after that.

And I am pleased that each of you hasn't given up in the face of the difficulties in becoming a better writer. Because of your own struggles, you have written something to share with me, and I am eager to read it.

Richard E. Barnes

Richard E. Barnes is Associate Professor and Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at USM. He still uses his college writing instructor as a model for his own teaching.

Contents

2 My Mother Never Danced ..... *Mohammad Yaqub*
5 Little Chick ..... *Esther Hernandez*
6 Man in Changing Society ..... *Abwoor Kndang*
8 In the Year 2000 ..... *Snezana Vanovac*
11 Camels ..... *Yemane Tsegai*
13 Coony ..... *Libbey Stewart*
15 A Wise Son ..... *Yao Binimou*
16 This Man ..... *Carol Little*
18 Brother Gone ..... *Brent Smith*
10 Summer Day ..... *Chandy Vann*
21 Hard Time ..... *Chhay Ieng*
24 Never Underestimate The Importance of Morale ..... *Tom Wheatley*
27 Sunflower ..... *Gloria Waters*
28 Tears ..... *Kevin Paul*
31 The Original Raggedy Ann ..... *Michelle Sass*
33 Native ..... *Gebru Nryao*
35 Chien's Escape ..... *Chien Thai*
36 Living in the Village ..... *Friday Bongomin*
38 Life's Journey ..... *Tim Carter*
41 First of the Miracles ..... *Yrgalem Woldehawariat*
42 Big Brothers, Big Sisters ..... *Ed Libby*
45 Teacher ..... *Ahmad Hussaini*
46 Women and Culture ..... *Mary Ali*
48 Happy Memories ..... *Slavisa Vanovac*
49 Elementary Fable ..... *Victoria Rusu*
51 Shady Lady - Part Two ..... *Pat Smith*
55 Rafting Fun ..... *David Serrano*
57 Barber Foods ..... *Evelyn Rice*
59 My Scariest Moment ..... *Leonor Huninghake*
61 A Car Accident ..... *Navan Leng*

My Mother Never Danced

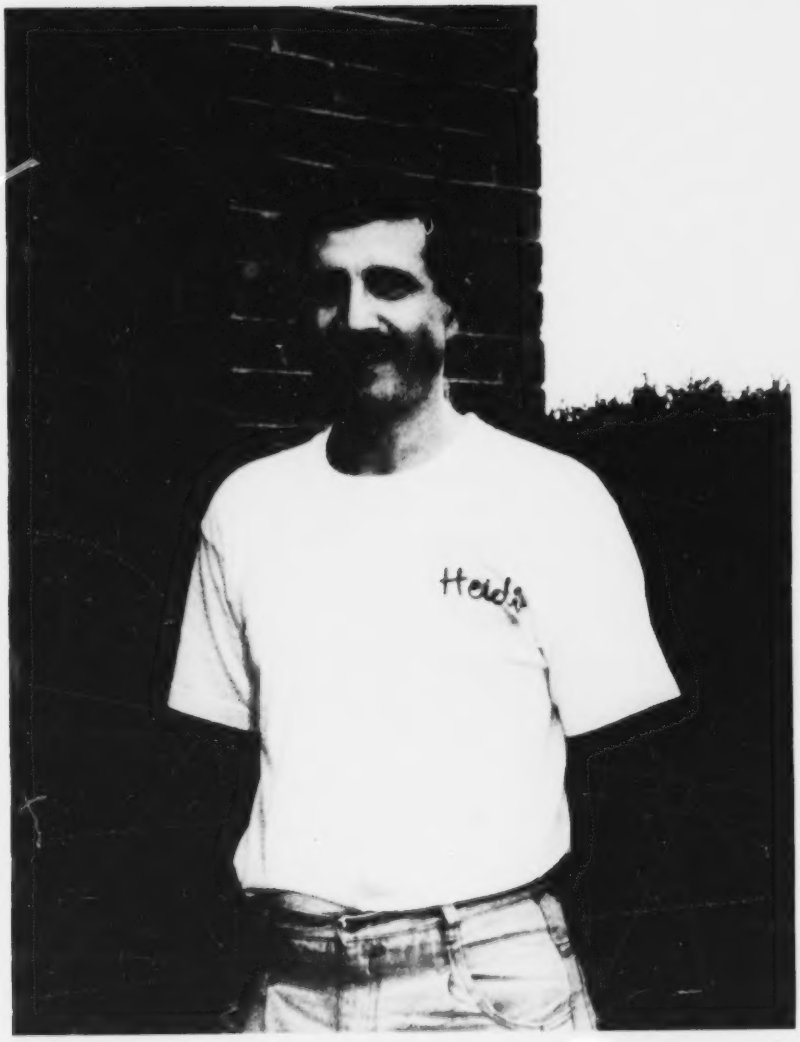
Mohammad Yaqub

That was long ago, I mean very long. The first days of my life, I remember a woman around me, reading the holy book, cleaning, milking, buttering, cooking, and teaching her children how to read the holy book. She was my mother.

She's a mid-size, hard working woman, who had to live in a big house with so many bedrooms and other belongings. Our house was surrounded by at least twelve foot tall walls. The main gate was also supposed to be kept closed at all times. As I remember my mother didn't go out of that house for twelve years, except one time when her brother who lived in a city which was about two hundred miles away, came over and took us to his marriage party.

My mother was not supposed to cross that door, and she never did so, other women of the village use to come and visit her, but she never visited them, because my father who was an extremist wanted it so. I remember one particular day as if it were yesterday, I will never forget. What happened was my older sister fell into a stream that was flowing just behind our back yard door. I ran to let my mother know, because I was too small to help her, so my mother ran to the back yard door and stood right there watching her daughter struggling and fighting for her life. She told me to ask our neighbors for help, but she didn't cross that doorway.

My name is Mohammad Yaqub. I'm from Afghanistan which is a small but beautiful country in middle Asia. I moved to the USA in 1992 because of the civil war in my country. I didn't want to put my children in a war with no purpose and I wanted to send them to school instead So, that's the reason I'm here.


Heidi

I am Esther. I am originally from Peru. I'm the eldest sibling of seven brothers and sisters. My mother is from the mountains of Peru. My father is from Lima, the capital. He's a singer. I came to America seven years ago. I lived in Boston for four years before moving to Portland, Maine. I hope my book helps many working women who have kids like my son Lorenz.

Little Chick

Esther Hernandez

It was early morning on the farm. The sky was still dark when Mr. Rooster was singing, "Kee kee kee ree kee, " and the little chick heard his father singing loudly.

**

The little chick was playing around the farm, but in the middle of the night the storm came, and the little chick was scared. He was trying to look for his mother. Everybody was confused on the farm.

**

The next day on the farm, the little chick found his mother, but nobody knew where his father was. Well, the little chick lived only with his mother, but everybody was very poor after the storm.

**

Mrs. Hen had to work. The little chick was very sad because he couldn't see his mother like before because she was very busy now. The little chick saw his mother from the window when she went to work.

**

When Mrs. Hen went to work, she said, "my little chick, no worry. "Mami" come back", but for the little chick it was difficult to understand what happened. He thought, "Mami no back to me." He was crying.

**

One day Mrs. Hen said, "Little Chick, come to me. Mami wants to talk to you." The little chick listened to Mrs. Hen who said, "I love you. I miss you every day, but you know I have to work."

**

Mrs. Hen thought about her little chick. She said, "I want you to be very sure that Mami will come back always. I am staying with you and your heart too." Time passed, and everything was good on the farm. It was summer again.

**

The little chick was growing bigger, and he was now a beautiful rooster. Now he has a new family, but he knows that his mother will always stay with him and his heart too.

**

"Colorin Colorado Este Cuento Se Ha Terminado"

Man in Changing Society

Abwoor Kndang

Once upon a time there was a man who came from the countryside looking for a job. When he reached in the city for him to get the job he was upset because he had no communication with the people of the area. The language spoken was unfamiliar to him. "What can I do to get for my children school uniforms? Last year I sold one goat for their uniforms and I am left with one goat." I'd rather go to the industrial area to look for a job at least to get them to go to school this year. On the way to the industrial area he asked himself, what could I say to anyone I meet to show me the famous factory? I know the name of the factory where everyone comes from in the countryside and goes there to get a job. I think Salaam Al Khom should be my word and the name of the factory. My determination is to get a job and let my children go to school. With my gentleness and my word Salaam Al Khom and factory name I managed to reach my destination. "Salaam Al Khom, I am looking for a job." At first they asked, which language do you speak? I told them my language and they went looking for a person who can interpret my language with the help of the personnel manager. But, they didn't find anybody. What they did was show the sign of the job they wanted to give me. We went with a manager. Surprisingly, he took me to the bathroom as my job. I asked myself, do I want my children to go to school and do I accept this job? No man, I won't do that sanitation.

"Please sir, is there no other job apart from sanitation?" He said, "yes" and I say "yes, I don't want sanitation. I'd rather sell my goat for the future of my kids." As the city is very large and I went to the church. When I reached there I asked for a job. They asked, "where are you from and which congregation are you?" I told them neither Christian or hell. "We can't help non Christians." I asked them what is a Christian? The quick answer from them is the follower of Christ.

My time was coming to miss these kids not to go to school. I decided to look for an agent which can help me get a school uniform for my kids. I went as far as to the Umma Tho LiSalam organization. I narrated my problem to them concerning my kids. I was taken to the chairman of the organization. On the way I asked myself, is this a religious organization? Last time I went to Christian, can I betray my religion to the God which I need of the rain he gives? He went on asking me, "Do you know your God?" We reached the chairman. The first question was, "What is your name?" I told my name and he said, "You are not Muslim, is not it true?" I said, "Yes." The chairman said, "Now for us to go with your request, we are going to convert you to Islam. Your request is very helpful for Islam to spread all over the country." "Please, Mister Chairman, what are you talking about? I am not here to talk about Islamism and to take Islam around the country." "Mr., we will give you two hours to go and bring your kids to us to go shopping." I went home happily and thinking the chairman had forgotten his plan to convert me to Islam. For the days I spent in the city my children were expecting me to bring their uniforms because the school is almost to open. When I told them we are to go to the city to get your uniform, they were happy. The

following morning, we took off to the city and take them to the chairman for their uniform. "This is an Islamic organization. We are to convert you to Islam and teach you to read Koran before going to public school. We are going to give your children Islamic names. Do you have any questions?"

I said, "things fall apart. I best go and sell my goat milk."

Hunger and poorness make people forget their belonging. Be what you are

In the Year 2000

Snezana Vanovac

All people of the world have talked about the year 2000 for many years. But now it is so near to us.

I wish many good things for all people in the next century. But, I am afraid, because it's a very short time for the realization of my wish.

In the first place, I wish for peace among all people of the world. I'd like for all people to be calm. Then, life would be better. I wish that all people would have good health, that the world would have a plentitude of food and no one would be hungry. Everybody would have happiness. I hope that there would be one nation and one language in the world....

Maybe one day.

But I think that people have a new chance every day. Everything depends on them. Green signal is waiting for them. I'm afraid that they don't see it or they don't want to do something new in their life. Every day I see people make big mistakes in their lives. They think that they are right. On first place they put their enjoyment. They like that they have pleasure for themselves. They don't care about other people. Sometimes they do some mistake to other people, only let them have good things, successful and happiness. I mean that is the wrong way.

People need to help each other all the time, everywhere. Actually, they are envious of each other. That is miserable. I hate that. That is not an advance in our life, even they don't think so. We need perseverance to each other, to help in trouble. To believe in people, but everything is gone, unfortunately. God made us as one being, but we divided into a million different people. Wittiness is vanished in the people. They become angry for the smallest reason. The people don't remember God's mercy and don't return thanks to Him and don't pay enough respect to Him.

I believe in destiny and the people will change for the better. I see sun which shines on all people of the world. I hope that the world would change in the near future and there will be only happiness, because there would be one nation, one language and peace among all people in the world. I hope so.

Snezana is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Camels

Yemane Tsegai

This is about camels.
Camels are very important in our country
because they help us when we need something,
like moving from place to place.
Camels are very strong; they could stay for two weeks without water.
That's why we call them strong and Eritrean patriots.
They did many things when we struggled for thirty years.
They are also very smart animals.
Sometimes if you talk, they understand you.
But if you do something, they never forget.
Even after many years, if they find you, they will kill you.
Camels give birth after one year, and they have milk you can use to drink.
Camels also offer transport.
Because we don't have support from other countries,
camels help us for everything we need from them.
Like giraffes, their necks are very tall.
Camels are sometimes dangerous. If you hit them,
they will always keep this in mind.
If they are traveling, they feed themselves from tree leaves.
You can eat meat from camels, and we use them
like no one can use them.
Most camels like to live in the desert or Sahara plane.

I am from Eritrea. I have been in Maine five years.

Coony

Libbey Stewart

It was a bright Spring day, the sun was full the air was warm, birds singing their songs, and beautiful apple blossoms flowing in the wind. My sister and I were outside playing around when from a distance came the sounds of a wild animal. We stopped and looked at each other. "What in the world is that?" I asked. The sound seemed to be a cross between a chatter and a purr. The fact that I was a carefree and determined ten year old caused me to be first to go investigate. My search began at the bottom of the driveway, where stood many alders of all types. I rounded an old maple tree expecting nothing, but found three little wobbly raccoons. I called to my sister "Hey Deirdre, come look at what I found!"

"What is it?" she asked.

"Just come here!" I exclaimed. As she reached the spot where I stood, her eyes grew with amazement. "What do we do?" I asked. "I'm not sure." she answered. Those three little mask-wearing critters looked at us with such wonder, though they did not seem to be afraid.

We began to wonder where they came from and where the mother might be. I told my sister I wanted to try feeding them. I ran up to the house and began to search through the cupboards. I just didn't know what to give them. Finally, I settled on a bowl of milk and a couple pieces of bread. I ran down to the tree and placed the bowl of milk and the bread down in front of them. They approached it slowly and just sniffed it. I guess they weren't hungry after all. I quietly sat leaned up against the tree and watched their every move. They looked so cuddly; I wanted so badly to pat them I just wasn't sure if I should. I had never encountered a wild animal face to face, so I was a little apprehensive. I decided I would just sit and watch. After a few minutes one of the babies wandered from the other two and it was heading directly toward me. It began to sniff my sneakers, then my pants. I slowly slid my hand down toward the baby coon's nose. He seemed a bit jumpy at first, but after a few minutes I was able to pet him. I will never forget the feeling of his fluffy, yet coarse fur. After he had enough of that, he scampered off to play with the other two.

I was content sitting there watching them play together, rolling around, chasing each other until my sister came to remind me of our dentist appointment. I didn't want to leave! We decided it was best to leave them just the way we found them in case their mother returned.

A couple of hours later we were finally home. As soon as I got out of the car, I noticed one of the little coons on the lawn, and it wasn't moving. Knowing there was nothing I could do, I ran down to the tree to see if the other two were OK. Sure enough they were curled up together asleep. I knew what I had to do, so I scooped them up and headed for the house. They were well aware of what had happened to one of the little ones. I had been trying to think of a way to ask my parents if I could keep them all day. I concluded that this would be the most effective way. I just took both of those cute baby coons right to them. After some debate, we finally came up with a plan. It basically came down to -- it was my responsibility to take care of them, feed them, and keep them out of mischief.

I'm from Freeport, Maine. I've been at Barber Foods for about two years now.

I am from the Ivory Coast of West Africa. I have been in America since Sept. 4th 1992. I lived in New York for one year. In 1993, I moved to Maine.

A Wise Son

Yao Binimou

This is a story from my grandfather

There is a man in a village named Koutou that had four sons. All the villagers thought three of them were wisest and the other one was not who is named Koutou. One day, Koutou the father told to all the village, he has a test for his sons and they will find out which one is going to be the wise son.

Then everybody started laughing at him and said: "Koutou, your son is not the wise one. He is crazy, foolish."

Anything that can describe the boy was not wise. The father maintained his decision to find out who will be his wise son. Now it is time to start the test. The father called the elder brothers and said: "Sons, could you buy three different things with two coins." The two elder sons said to him: "How can we buy three things with two coins of money." We can not do that, Dad."

"Now my last son I am going to call is Koutou and he is going to challenge his brothers"said the father.

Again the audience was laughing and said: "Like I told to your brothers, go and buy for me three different things with two coins."

Gentle boy, obedient son, Koutou said to his father: "Dad, I can do that. Give the coins and I will buy for you."

Surprised, amazed are the people. A few minutes later, he came with a cake and gave to his father. His dad could not believe him and said: "Oh well son, how could you do this to me my son? You are the only one I trust, oh my God."

His father started sobbing and Koutou said to him: "Oh dad, let me explain what I did. They made this cake with: #1 flour, #2 baking, #3 they fried with oil." Here are your three things you asked to buy for you."

His father was very amazed and told the audience his son Koutou is perfectly right. So everybody was surprised and amazed to hear that Koutou explained such an idea to the audience. From that day, everyone knows Koutou is a perfect person. He is not crazy or foolish or has lost his mind like they thought.

This Man

Carol Little

"For my husband"

This is no ordinary man--though he only stands five feet eight
he may be small in size but he is grand in heart
When most people meet this man they like him
He looks life square in the face and lives every day to its fullest
And so he does not waste precious time
His love of living has given me many personal rewards
This man has taught me how to walk softly to the side of a river and
throw a fly line into a swirling pool--
To tenderly catch and release a beautiful trout so it lives another day
This man has shown me how to hold a paddle and canoe quietly through a
wilderness pond to enjoy mother nature at her best
To sit quietly as night approaches so that you can stare into the darkness
and
hear the night pulling a shade over the day
This man has stood behind me for years and given me his strength to be a
good loser and
stood proudly in the background unnoticed as I accepted awards that only
he made possible
As each season comes and goes--I have learned to enjoy the windflowers
that he has
lovingly picked for no reason
This man takes me on walks where no man has walked--only a caribou
and a lone wolf
To a fishing hole where no man has fished only to laugh at me when I fall
in the water
This man who has made life so good for me would much prefer a stump in
the back woods
than dinner with the governor
His love of the wilderness is always present in our lives
He makes life an adventure--this man

Carol is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Brother Gone

Brent Smith

My brother Dane was three years younger than I. He was larger than life and so full of it. My older brother stayed with my grandparents when we moved to Orland and my other brother was eleven years younger, so I wasn't as close to them. Dane and I weren't that close until we moved to Orland, after we moved we were the only friends each other had for quite some time. We went to the same school for the first year, we went swimming, fishing, hunting, and partying, together. We basically endured our first year of Orland together. I say endured because we didn't really like Orland at first.

When we lived in Bangor I thought of Dane as a tagalong. He would hang around me and my friends, and make a nuisance of himself. I never really thought of him as a friend, just a younger brother. When we moved to Orland, Dane and I became friends. When my brother died, it was the lowest point in my life. I always thought he would be there when I grew old, but I was wrong; he died when he was only twenty-five. He shot himself in his trailer, and left a note saying, "Please take care of my dogs." Dane loved his dogs more than he loved himself. he also left two roses, one yellow, one red. They were for his girlfriend. She left him the day before he killed himself. She never took the roses. When she left him he told her the next time she saw him he would be in a box, and he was usually right, or thought he was, and always had to have the last word. I guess he was right that time.

She never told my mother or anyone what he said that night. I'm sure she thought he was just saying that to get her back, but she was wrong. I don't blame her, but I wish she had said something to someone; maybe he would still be here today. So if anyone tells you they are going to kill themselves, believe them. No matter how many times they say it or how they say it, take them seriously because you may never see them again. Why is it that when people we love die, we wish we had told them how much we loved them, but this isn't enough for us to tell the living that we love them?

When you love someone, don't wait to tell them, for they may not know. I made that mistake. I assumed my brother knew, and now it's too late, he's gone.

Brent is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

A true story which I am about to tell you, is an event that happened in my life. Just in a short period of time, a family of seven was almost wiped out completely.

Hard Time

Chhay leng

In October, 1976, Cambodia was deeply under the control of Khmer Rouge, a communist party that occupied Cambodian government in 1975 - 1978. During the occupation of this government, most of Cambodian citizens encountered great difficulty in their life. Some were forced to work in the labor camp, and others who stayed behind worked very hard as well. Every family was not allowed to cook at home. At lunch or supper time, we had to go to cafeteria. It had been for several months that the government did not provide adequate food to the citizen in the town. Each day food became less and less. It got to a point that there was no longer food. It was all water. They had a large pot about the size of a large round table filled with water, and in the water there was a handful of rice. The people in the town lacked nutrition. They became skinnier and skinnier until their bodies had only skin covering the bone. They also became so weak. At this time every one did not want to move anywhere. My family just like other families. Every morning, we got up early as usual around four o'clock. This morning was the same as other mornings, our stomach always roared for food.

I put my both hands over it trying to stop this awful sound. I could not stay still. I walked in, out and around the house looking for something to eat. But there wasn't any food available. For the past several months, I and members of my family did not have any food to fill out stomach, except edible leaves that we found on the fences near out neighbor's house. This morning every member of my family was quite awake. We sat around in a circle looking at each other faces wondering what leaves were available for lunch today. The situation did not look good when I heard my father speak to my mother. He said: "Oh honey, the leaves, on the fences, are all gone. We eat them too fast that they do not have any chance to grow back." At this time our health was deteriorated. Half of out bodies from the waist down were swollen like the balloons filled with water. And the top half, only skin covered the bones. My brother and sister's hair had fallen down as leaves falling in the autumn. When we walked, we did not feel our feet touch the ground, only numb feeling.

As the sun passed over our head, we started to feel so weak. Suddenly, a neighbor of ours came over to our house to tell us the wonderful news that we had been waiting for. "Do you know what?" she asked my mother. "I heard the hospital provides good food to all patients," she continued. My mother turned over to my father and asked him if he wanted to go to the hospital. At first he was hesitatant to say yes; but after a minute of thinking and pushing from my mother, he decided to go.

Happy Moment

Two months later, we were still in the same situation as two months before. But this time we felt lonely because my father was away in the hospital. We did not know how he was doing. We were so tired to go anywhere. Despite the weakness I felt, and the same time my stomach kept asking for food, then I decided to leave my house wandering from village to village looking for food to eat. As I went from town to town, I was unable to find anything to fulfill my roaring stomach. Just before I gave up I arrived at one town about fifty miles from my village. I walked into a young couple's, Vuth and Moeut, house who just got married to beg for food. I told them that I was an orphan and that both of my parents just died about two months ago. They were so happy to receive and take me into their house. They cleaned me up very nicely and they brought out a lot of food that I had been looking for. When I finished eating, the couple asked me if it was all right for them to adopt me. I was excited because this was an opportunity for me to eat more good food every day from now on. While I was thinking about good things, I did not realize that I was about to run into a messy situation.

On the next day, while I was playing in the front yard of my new family's house, there was a kid walked by. He looked at me and I looked at him. I asked myself that "Do I know or see him somewhere before?" I thought for a few minutes, then I realized that I did see him once when he went to visit his uncle who resided in my village. He walked past the house, but he decided to turn around and talked to me. He asked me, "What are you doing here?" Then I told him, "I am living here now". He looked at me straight in the eyes. At that time, I had a feeling, he did not like me whatsoever. I was correct - sure enough, I found that out the next day. Later on that day, when I was not home, the kid, who I encountered several hours ago, came back to the house and talked to my adopted parents. He asked them all kinds of questions about why I came to live with them. They told him, "He is an orphan. We do not have kids so we decided to adopt him". As he heard that he raised his eyebrow and said, "He is not an orphan. He lied - his parents are still alive." The last words that came out from the kids mouth as if they were stones flying toward and hitting the couple right in the face. They were so furious at me. They went to the town leader and told what they heard. After hearing this, the town leader asked me to go over to the town house. As I arrived at the town house, I felt so nervous. I knew there must be something wrong. One minute later I found myself standing across from the town leader. He asked me, "Did you tell the lie to these people that your parents were dead?" I was stunned. I was afraid and I couldn't answer his question. I was standing there as a piece of rock. He looked at me with anger, then he told me to get out of the town before he decided to send me to a place to be wasted. I started to cry and left the house as quickly as I could. As I ran, I fell down so many times. I was so weak. Down half of my body swelled up like a balloon, and the top half was so skinny, only skin covering bones. My legs were so numb. I ran forward very hard, but I felt as if I ran backward. One hour later I was able to get out of town. On that day I did stop anywhere asking for food. There was only one thing in my mind. I wanted to get home where my real family was.

Broken Heart

As the sun was about to set, I arrived home sweet home. I felt a relief. I was free of death now. When I went into the house, I saw my mother was crying very hard hugging a backpack that my father took with him when I left for the hospital. I was puzzling and asking what was going on and why she was crying. She told me with tears on her cheek, "Son, from now on we will be alone. Your father died today." Then she continued crying. I asked her with stutter voice, "Where was his body buried?" She told me that his body was buried in the mass grave. As we were talking, my sister, who was five years old and her body was swelled up and could not move anywhere for five months, was trying to get up and walk. As she got up, she fell down to the ground. No matter how hard she tried, she could not stand. She was afraid, afraid of dying. One week later she died. A few days later, my brother who was six years old and had the same health condition, died in the morning; and later that afternoon my baby sister also died. At this time, my mother had a mental collapse.

Now, I am a grown man. When I think back to these events, I cry and cry very hard, but only in my broken heart.

Never Underestimate
The Importance of Morale

Tom Wheatley

It's not what you've got
It's what you end up with

It's not who you are
It's who you become

It's not what you start with
It's what you end up with

It's not where you are
It's where you are going

It's not what you have
It's what you give

It's not what you've done
It's what you are going to do

It's not the life you lead
It's where life leads you

My name is Tom Wheatley. I have worked at Hannaford Brothers, South Portland warehouse for eight years. I am a member of the safety committee, first aid and fire responder and a union steward. I have many other responsibilities at home and at work. I am dedicated to the preservation of full time jobs here and throughout the country and making a better way of life for the working class.

My name is Gloria Waters. My interests are gardening and taking care of my dog and cat. I enjoy my two daughters, Sarah and Jessica, and also my first grandchild, Christopher

Sunflower

Gloria Waters

I am
a seed.
I have
fallen from a sunflower.
I was
with many other seeds,
but now I am alone.
It is
very strange here.
I am
getting all wet.
I hope
it's rain,
not that silly dog.
My sides
are now opening
I am
very scared.
I have
never felt this way before.

Now I
have my feet
firmly in the dirt.
Oh, what a feeling!
I am
now growing taller.
The sun
is nice and warm.
I am
reaching out
with leafy arms.
Oh, what a thrill on
Barber Food's Hill!
The sun
is out, and
"I Love It."
I think
I'll follow it always.
Along the way
don't forget to
"Stop and smell
the SUNFLOWERS."

Tears

Kevin Paul

t took mom a long time to dry those tears from her face
and it`s really hard let me tell you sister...
All those years they have been going to Ethiopia with
hope of the nation to bring us peace..yeah.
Women have been crying all over the world with hope and say that,
Peace! Peace! Peace!!! at last...
for our children to have a good education...

They move from Ethiopia to Abuja still talking about
that kind of seed peace talk!! Peace talk!! yeah man
we don`t want that peace anymore...
Cause my mom said she`s been crying for peace since
she was a young girl

What we need is \ equal rights \ and justice...

I don`t want peace no more
cause my mom has been crying for it,
till now no peace
you were young when it was happening till now
now those days when a man see women crying
men say they are crying for peace some time
we blame them for nothing
but today when men are crying the women themself
they don`t know why men are crying but men
know why women are crying
we all know what we are crying for
let me tell you again.

Kevin is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Michelle is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

The Original Raggedy Ann

Michelle Sass

This past Halloween my mother's dream came true, or should I say on January 31, 1994 my mother's greatest dream came true. A six pound seven ounce healthy baby girl was born. Her lungs just as loud as they are to this very day. Breanne Lea Enos, the light of our lives, and the daughter my mother wished upon me. Too smart for her own good, at the age of two and a half, she speaks in full and complete sentences. But her one downfall as is mine, is her mouth is as big as her brain. She speaks her mind and does not like to take no for an answer, like myself.

I knew within the first eight hours of our little girl's life she was going to be just like me. There could be worse things in life than to turn out like your mother. But from the very moment she was born we also knew she was going to be a Daddy's girl, such as I was with my father. Breanne did nothing but scream for the first five minutes that I held her after birth, that is until "Daddy" got her into his arms. Larry no sooner got her into his clutches, and they were both quiet and fast asleep. Of course after working a ten hour shift coming home to me saying "Honey, I think it's time," he had the audacity to go into bed and go to sleep. But I was also a week overdue and that whole week I was telling him it "was time". Well he got about one hour of sleep. I quickly called up my mother and father to drive into Portland at two o'clock in the morning. It took them about an hour to drive in from West Buxton, in the middle of a snowstorm. By the time they got to my apartment in town, the coffee was ready and waiting. I went in and woke up Larry and told him that mom and dad were there, and to his surprise it really was time. We then all sat down for our beverage of choice, coffee for the men, tea for my mother, and for myself diet pepsi. When we finished we all piled into my father's Bronco and went to the hospital. But that did not happen, thirteen and a half hours later our little girl was born full of spunk and as pink as they come.

Her first year of life seemed just to fly right by. By nine and a half to ten months she was walking, by eleven months she was talking quite a bit. By this time I had started working at Barber Foods. She still finds it hard to understand that Mommy is not there to put her to bed at night. But that's okay because she will not go to bed for me anyhow.

Now at this time her first year was up, baby book was complete and we start a new chapter in our lives. I honestly believe that the terrible twos kicked in just a little bit early, and they have not stopped yet. But anyhow we roll on past eighteen months, nothing new and exciting happened except she finally got her first tooth at fourteen months. Around the end of September to the beginning of October my mother starts throwing around ideas of Halloween costumes for Breanne. I told her that we had all month to think about this, what was the big rush. Then about the middle of October she came over for lunch like she does every Wednesday. This time she brought a brown paper bag with her. I had asked her several times what was in the bag but she just ignored me. About ten minutes before she had to leave she handed the bag to me. I opened it up and inside was an old childhood doll that I loved. It was my old

Raggedy Ann doll. Every little girl in my neighborhood had to have a Raggedy Ann doll about 24 inches large. My doll was a 36-inch life-size version, which I just loved to death. I may have only been two or three years old when I got that doll, but boy, did I love her. I think that's why my mother got the idea to dress me up in her clothes. She went everywhere with me and I wanted to take her trick-or-treating. So my mother canned the clown idea for that year, took the clothes off of the doll for her little two year old. To me Breanne didn't need the doll, she is the original Raggedy Ann; small little body and the reddest and curliest hair.

Ever since that point, aunts and cousins have asked to borrow my doll when their daughters reached the age of two or three. So it only seemed appropriate for my daughter to wear the doll's clothes when she was of the right age. And I just hope that when my little girl grows up, and if she has children and one of them is a little girl, that she might want to dress her in the same clothes that she wore for Halloween.

Native

Gebru Nrayo

Coffee is native to Ethiopia and has been cultivated and brewed in Arab countries for centuries. The name (coffee) arose after on of Ethiopia's states Ceffa. The drink was introduced to Europe in the mid 17th century. plantations were established in Indonesia, the West Indies, and Brazil, and soon coffee cultivation became an important element in colonial economies. Today, Latin America and Africa produce most of the world's coffee. The United States in the largest importer. The coffee bean in the world's most valuable agricultural commodity. In the late 1980's coffee imports to United States alone cost over $4 billion annually.

Encyclopedia 1993

My name is Gebru Nrayo. I'm from Ethiopia. I have been working at Barber Foods for six and a half years.

MERICAN
COMPAN
GORHAM C

Chien's Escape

Chien Thai

In January of 1983, I gave some money to somebody to take me in a small boat to get to the big boat to get out of my country, Viet Nam, and go to I didn't know where. The engine in the big boat didn't work and the wind was too much to take us to Thailand. The fishermen took the watches and the gold of the people on the boat but they didn't take us to Thailand and they took some women from our boat and raped them and then they left. Three times more it happened just like that. On the boat it smelled bad, there was no water, and three of us had to keep the water out of the boat. More fishermen came and went around the boat and looked at us -- we looked bad -- and they left -- they didn't want to help us. We were on the sea from Vietnam to Thailand for seven days. No water, no food. There was a storm, too. We thought we would die on the sea and never go anywhere. We were happy when we saw the birds on the sea, it looked like land was around there. We thought we died but came back alive then. We got to the beach, and helped ourselves to get out of the boat, and the boat turned over. The people there didn't help us. They wanted everything from us. The police came to the beach and took us to the police station and gave us food. Then they took us to an American camp.

I am Chien Thai. I live in America for thirteen years. I came from Viet Nam. I'm working at American Tool Companies for six years. I'm a machine operator.

Living in the Village

Friday Bongomin

My parents and my two sisters lived in the village called Magwi, and I lived with my uncle in Torit town 36 miles east of my home village.

I was ten years old when my mother sent me to her brother John. He had two children, William and Sue. He sent me to school with his two children and I lived a happy life.

I grew up with my uncle's children, and no one knew my real parents. I sometimes liked to see my parents, but my uncle could not allow me to go during the school period. He could only let me go for a short period, and brought me back with him in the town. In the village, I liked to be with my mother and my two sisters. I liked to hear some stories from them about the village. I also like to be near older people because they told me many stories about there living in the past. I think they liked me, too. I usually greeted them with respect, and when they called me, I went and did what they wanted me to do.

During the dry season, villagers went hunting; they killed many animals like gazelles, deer and buffalo for food. Women also went hunting with the men. They carried buckets and jerkens for water. When they came back home, all the buckets they were carrying were full of meat. There was also a group of women fishing. They fish with "Ogwaa." This Ogwaa is made from tiny green woods and nets.

I sometimes liked to go after the women where they went fishing. They made loud noises while they dipped their ogwaa or nets in the water.

People in the village like dancing, too. Mom and Dad also liked dancing. I liked watching them dance. Mom seemed to be the greatest in singing. She had a nice voice I remember. Many people joined her in singing wonderful songs of their native land.

Not long after as I returned to Uncle in the town, Uncle died in a car accident, and his body was taken for burial in the village. I decided to remain with my parents in the village after the funeral.

My life began to change with lots of worries. That same year, war broke out in the country. Transportation became very difficult for the people living out of the city.

Small shops and stores in the village were closed. Some of them were looted by the rebel soldiers; houses were burned by the Government soldiers and villagers were scattered because of the fighting. Some were hiding in the mountains, nothing came from town to the villages. There were no soap, salt or cloth. People began to suffer from many missing items. Father became very sick, and died because there is no hospital functioning at that time.

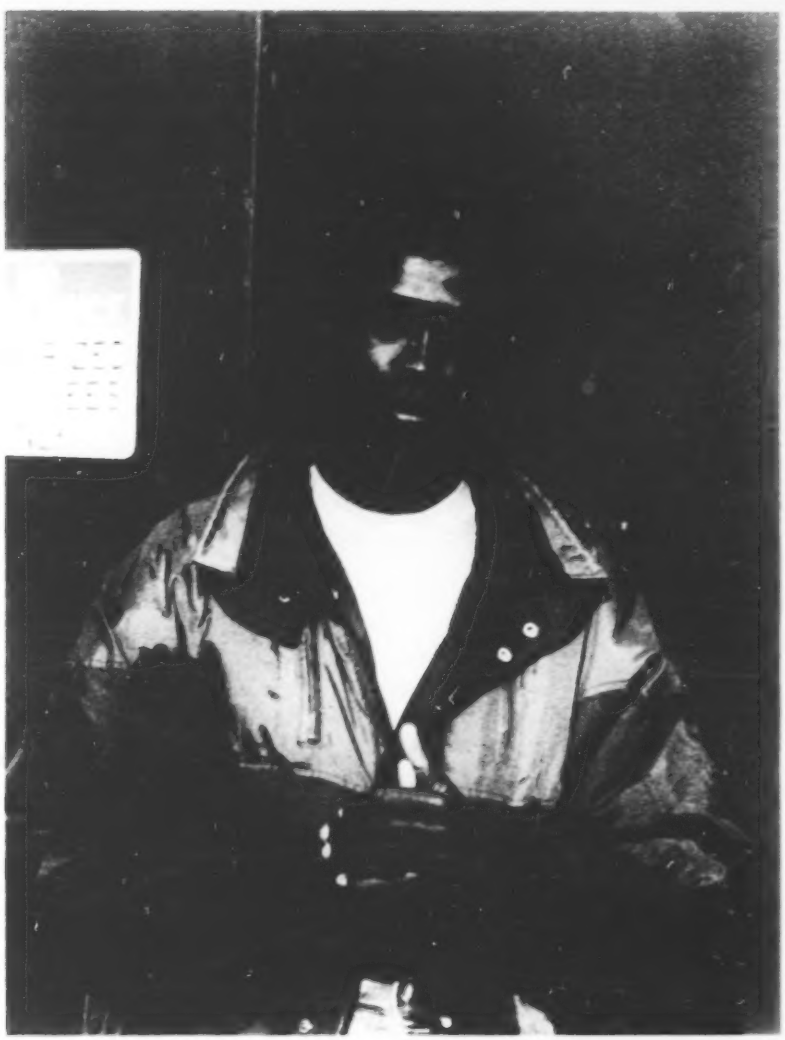
My elder brother Francis is a teacher in a technical school in Juba town 84 miles away from our village. I learned that there are some people arranging to go the next week to Juba, so I went and asked Mother if she could let me go with those people. She did not like me to leave, but she thought of the situation and the life in the village, then she let me go with the others. We went and reached Juba safely. My brother took me to the school and I was registered. I started class again.

After completing my Senior two level, there came a policy in education that all the schools in Equatoria-Juba were to be taught in Arabic language only. We demonstrated

against it, and all the schools in Juba were closed. During the demonstration, many students lost their lives. Students were being shot like animals by the Sudanese armies. In time they used tanks to crush the students; many were hiding in churches because the soldiers were not admitted to go in.

When we show things were becoming worse, because the president had given an order that the student representatives were to be taken to Khartoum in order to behead (slaughter) them. By the help of black Sudanese Securities, church leaders/ black army officers, we come out of Juba town.

My father was a Civil Engineer in Uganda where I was born in Kampata in 1971 (10-9-71). I started my school in 1981 in Torit district, Sudan at St. Teresa primary school.



Life's Journey

Tim Carter

think of life's journey as a trip in a bubble. As a fetus our bubble is the world of our mother's womb. This bubble is well defined and well protected. There are no choices or needs.

Some people are born, both feet hit the ground running, through the double swinging doors they go, stopping only long enough to turn and say, come on ma. These people know no boundaries. The world is their boundary, their oyster.

I was born, both feet hit the ground, I stubbed my toe, banged my head and tried to crawl back into that protective bubble and have been trying to for a long time.

The protective boundary we remember so well from the womb and would love to goo back to at times, expands after birth. Jobs, family and obligations expand it. Most of the time it expands because it needs to, not because we want it to.

Some people can expand this boundary with ease. Most do not dare explore the inner wall of the bubble and wouldn't dream of going outside the bubble.

Workplace education was a way to bring that feared, unknown outside world into my bubble since I was not about to journey out for any reason.

What the people brought was not what my mind had envisioned. They brought wonder, hope, laughter and light. The light was the education I needed to expand the bubble I was in. They gently entered my world and I learned not to fear what was not known but to be taught. It was as if they installed a hinge door to my bubble that they could gently push open.

Then as I walked my journey I was led to other bubbles: Nichols Portland, Wood Structures, Inc. the University of Southern Maine. My bubble brushed up against these other bubbles and I peered out through the wall of the bubble as it expanded.

I no longer fear what is outside my bubble. I have started classes at the University. I can expand my bubble whenever I choose. I just needed the help I dared not leave my bubble to get. I would like to thank Workplace Ed. for coming after me.

I would also like to thank my science teacher for teaching me the world of science ain't so big and so bad after all and the name should be changed.

I would like to share one more thing I came across as I tried to get centered, in my bubble, on Sunday and I felt it was somehow related. I can't remember where I read the following but it stayed in my mind.

Dear counter of coins, the true treasure is not hidden and protected in vaults. It is buried in the midst of man. Only his lack of thought can shield it from the world and from himself. Such a man is only in debt when he thinks he cannot pay. However, even though he may owe you coins, you are in debt to him if you cannot see the treasure in his heart.

Tim is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Yrgalem is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

First of the Miracles

Yrgalem Woldehawariat

It was time for the wet season to begin in Ethiopia's Wollo province. But two months passed and still no rain. The ground in the gardens hardened like cement, the gardens that were carefully planted under the punishing sun. Sometimes dark clouds loomed over Wollo village, but they were only testing. The cattle began to die from lack of grass. People used the meat for food. Day and night they cooked meat.

The village people prepared to bring the rain. All teenagers were sent to the magical stone to pray day and night, but nothing was working.

The sky was very clear & beautiful to see, but the village people needed rain. There was no smiling face in the village. Thinking & praying in every corner, they talked about the rain problem. They were hungry and starved, upset with their magical stone god. People of the village complained to the magical stone.

The government sent some groups of people to do research in the village. They researched two things: that people of the village needed food and belief in the real God. One of the researchers asked the village people to pray with him to the real God who created me, and they asked for rain. People thought he was lying. He was trying hard, while some of the village joined to pray to the real God.

The next day the old men came to the researcher to tell him to leave the village because we were acting against our God. The researcher never retreated, praying harder and asking God to forgive the people, and they saw clouds over the village. At night a heavy rain fell. The people of the village hugged and cried, laughed with each other. They know the true God of the world who sacrificed for our sin.

Big Brothers Big Sisters

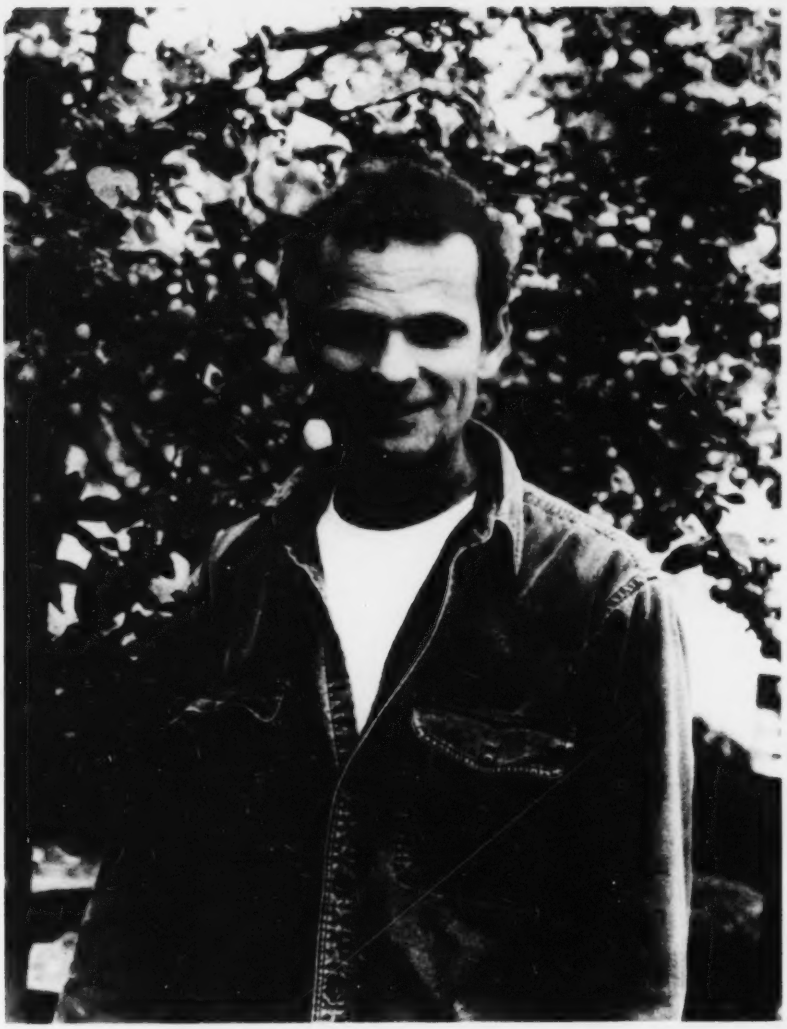
Ed Libby

This is a program I had heard about from time to time over the years. In fact my sister-in-law had been a big sister. After my daughter got married and left the house, I found I had extra time on my hands. It was while my wife and I were on vacation in Florida, I made up my mind to check into this organization. I wanted to make a positive difference in a boy's life. After talking with Sam Beal, the director of Big Brothers Big Sisters, I knew this was something I wanted to do. While they did a police check on me, and mailed the questionnaires to my references, I attended their training classes. After three months they called and said they had made a match. They gave me a brief history about Cory, his interest, age, family background, and I accepted. Meanwhile my history, age, and family background was presented to his mother. She accepted and we were matched. Sam called me to set a time and date, for all of us to get to meet each other. It was a Tuesday at 5 P.M. at Cory's house.

Tuesday arrived and at five I drove in the driveway and went to the door. Sam had not arrived yet. I introduced myself to Cory's mom and his sister. After a few minutes Cory came in to the kitchen and we were introduced. I think the first thing he said was, " Do you want to see my rabbits?" At that time there were only two. Sam showed up and explained that the South Portland bridge was up and made him twenty minutes late.

At this meeting a one year contract was signed by me, Cory, and his mother. Each of us had a part to read, agree to, and sign. Cory invited Sam and me to look at the rabbits. Sam decided it was time for him to leave, then Cory and I headed for the rabbits' cage. After talking about his rabbits for several minutes, Cory looked down at my feet and said, " Ed you're standing on snowball." I looked down and found I was standing on a pile of rabbit bones. Cory told me Snowball had died six months ago. I was very at ease and thought our first meeting went very well. We talked for a while and decided we would have our first outing the following Saturday and I would pick him up at 9. A.M.

On Friday night a message on the answering machine said Cory had the flu, and would not be able to meet with me Saturday. I called back and said I felt bad that Cory was sick, but I could rent a movie and could spend at least a couple of hours with him. He quickly agreed and that is how we spent our first outing.



Ed is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Hi, my name is Ahmad Hussaini. I am from Afghanistan.
I have worked at Barber Foods for almost four years.

Teacher

Ahmad Hussaini

I saw this in a book, "I teach the prophet and he teaches you the right way," God says.

My parents were always telling me that I had to respect my teacher as much as I respect my mother and my father. In fact, they said to be very nice to them because they are the people who make your future. "We will not be here, but the education will be with you," my mother said.

One day a famous Islamic named Imam-I-azem was sitting with his friends, and a person walked by and that famous person stood up with respect and said hi and spoke to the man. "Why did you say hi to him, and in fact, you respected him, when you knew that no one even wants to look at him?" his friends asked him.

"He taught me something about dogs", Iman said.

"You respected him because he has dogs?" one of his friends asked.

"No, I respected him because he taught me something which I did not know. At this point he was my teacher and I had to respect him. This is Islamic wisdom.

1. God describes himself as a teacher.
2. Teaching is a sacrifice.
3. Teaching is a mercy.
4. Teaching is worship and respect to a teacher is also worship.
5. Any teacher can be a scientist, but any scientist cannot be a teacher.
6. A society without school is stunted, and a school without teachers is a body without soul.

Respect Teachers; They Deserve It.

Women and Culture

Mary Ali

Women in my country she don't work.
She stay home to take care of babies and
she take care inside the house
cooking and cleaning.
So when she go outside or
if somebody come
in the house, even her husband's
brother, she has to cover up with a black dress
from her face to feet.
Women she has to sit in another room
and man in another room so
women all the time she is under her husband.
She doesn't have rights.
Man he can marry four women
but he treats them equal. He has to do
everything equal house, gold and dress.
Anything he has to do equal
so the wives that are together
are not jealous. They are friends
with women she is under her husband.
If they have a daughter when
she grows up her parents they bring her a husband to marry.
She knows him and he knows her only by photographs.
Different cultures look like that.

Mary is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

Happy Memories

Slavisa Vanovac

When I was a young boy, twelve years old, I had many funny situations happen. I remember I had two good friends. We bloomed and loved all people. We went together to school in the same level.

Every day we went back and forth to each other's homes. It was a good time for jokes and funny things. We were young and happy during that time.

It was a time of peace and love. Those days were the happiest of my life. During that time there was a disco club in the school twice a week.

Every Tuesday and Friday we went dancing and listening to popular music from America, Italy, England and Yugoslavia. We were choosing girls for a dance and we were trying to kiss the girls like "experienced men." It was the life of twelve year old boys in 1977. I was one of them. These memories are my soul.

I am from Yugoslavia. I have lived here for two years.

Elementary Fable

Aurel Barange

Translated by - Victoria Rusu

One diamond,

of ten karats

said to the charcoal,

"Brother, Although we are

from the same dough,

You haven't a destiny too brilliant."

"It is possible,

But I'm not worried.

You shine on a girl's finger,

But I give light

To the entire world."

MORAL?

Whispers she,

"One is luster,

the Other is LIGHT."

Victoria is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine.

COMPANIES,

GORHA OPERAT

Pat is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

Shady Lady - Part Two

Pat Smith

"It's okay girl" Jeff stated as the two of them arrived before the white ranch style house with the wooden sign stating Victoria Springs Veterinary Hospital. "You wait here, Jeff, while I get Dr. Bender," Barbara stated as she jumped from the driver's seat and headed for the animal clinic door.

"Be with you in a moment", came a deep masculine voice from the rear of the clinic. Barbara paced the waiting area as she waited. Finally, Dr. Bender entered the waiting area.

"Why, Barbara, how are you?"

"Fine, Dr. Bender. Jeff's out in the car with a stray that's hurt quite badly."

"Well let's go see what we got, okay," he stated as he held the door open for Barbara to exit.

The doctor approached the rear of the car, looked Jeff over and saw what his mother was concerned about.

"It's okay Jeff, I'll take good care of her. Don't worry, I'll check her over, take a few x-rays and get an IV started."

"I want to stay, I want to know she'll be alright," Jeff replied.

"Tell you what. I'll check her over while you go clean up. Then your folks can bring you back. I promise to call if she gets worse. You go home and clean up. You can't come in covered in all that muck, I have to worry about infections," Dr. Bender stated.

"I guess you're right. I'll be back before you know it," Jeff sighed as he gave the stray one last pat as the doctor entered his office.

The ride home was a silent one. Jeff stared out the window and wondered where the dog came from and why she was hurt? Turning towards his mother to ask if she had any ideas about it, he noticed she was upset...really upset.

"Mom?"

Without looking at Jeff, Barbara pulled the car to the side of the road, turned off the ignition and turned to look at her son. Quietly and softly she stated, "Jeff, do you think Harry and I are the horrible people you made us out to be? You took off so fast that I didn't have time to tell you Harry thought it would be better for you to take the rest of the week off from your classes. I want you to know he thinks the world of you and is trying so hard to be close to you. Jeffrey, I am tired of being caught in the middle. I am tired of trying to bring you both together. Frankly, I am tired of your attitude. If you do not do something about it, you will have yourself to blame for our not being able to talk." Barbara took a deep breath to calm herself and waited for her son to reply. Jeff sat with his head down and stared at his hands. He raised his head, looked at his mother and said, "I'm sorry Mom. I thought about going to school and just couldn't. How was I to know you were going to let me stay home?"

"Jeff, why couldn't you talk to me about it? We always talked before."

"Because, you have Harry now, you don't need me anymore."

"Oh honey, that's not true. We always talked before and when something bothers you, you can still talk to me."

"Can I Mom? What about Harry? How can I talk to you if Harry will know."

"Harry doesn't have to know things you don't want to tell him. But why can't Harry be part of our discussions? How can we become a family if we don't talk? Can you answer me that?

"I don't know", Jeff sighed.

"That's what I'm talking about Jeff. That's the attitude I'm talking about. Don't make me choose between you." Barbara stated as she turned forward and started the car.

"Okay Mom, I'll try."

As they arrived home, they spotted Harry sitting on the porch reading the newspaper. He

lowered the paper, folded it and placed it on the picnic table as he walked to the car to greet his family.

"Hi, did you two go out and have some fun?"

"I wish we did. Jeff found a stray at his old fishing hole. The poor thing was hurt really badly. Oh, don't hug me, I'm a mess. Let's get cleaned up and I'll make some lunch. Then we'll go see how the dog's doing, okay? Barbara stated as she watched her son as he came around the car.

"Wow, what in the world did you two do? Look at the mud. Why don't the two of you get cleaned up and I'll make lunch," Harry replied as he ushered his family in the door.

A short time later Barbara came down to greet her husband with a hug and a kiss.

"I missed that!" Barbara sighed.

"Me too! Now tell me what really happened."

"Nothing, really. I was downstairs and Jeff came tearing into the house screaming bloody murder. I dropped my laundry and ran up the stairs to see him hysterical." Barbara answered.

"It looked like more when you first got home," Harry remarked looking straight into her eyes.

Okay, there is more but it's something I can't discuss with you. It is something I discussed with Jeff. I think the answer should come from him." With that Harry let the question drop.

"Well, how did Ted look? I haven't seen him since just before we got married," Harry asked.

"Oh, I forgot you went to college with Dr. Bender," Barbara stated.

"Man, that sounds funny, I mean to me he's just Ted. We had some mighty fine times fishing together when we went to Northwestern. He's the reason I moved here to teach. All he ever talked about was Victoria Springs. I'm really glad I listened to him. I wouldn't have found you or Jeff." Harry smiled and sat down at the kitchen table.

After lunch they all went to the animal clinic to see how the dog was doing. Dr. Bender.met them at the door.

"Come on in, the dog's resting. She was pretty banged up, but she'll be alright Jeff."

"Can I go see her?" Jeff asked.

"Sure, but be quiet. I want her to rest. She's been through a lot," Dr. Bender instructed.

"Okay," Jeff replied as he dashed off to be with the stray.

"Do you know who the owner is?" the doctor questioned.

"No, Jeff just found her over at Turtle Creek bridge. Why?" Barbara asked.

"Well, I thought she might have been hit by a car at first, but the x-rays showed some old injuries. It looks like she was beaten", Dr. Bender stated.

"Beaten? Who would do that to an animal? Harry asked.

"I can't rightly tell," Dr. Bender replied.

"Would it be possible to adopt the dog, Ted?" Harry questioned.

"Well, when the waiting period is over, I'll have to give the dog to them. I can't prove they are the ones that hurt the dog," Dr. Bender replied.

"Let's not look for problems that are not here. Let's wait to see if anyone comes forward first," Barbara stated.

"You're right, let's wait and see. If no one comes forward, we would like to adopt the dog as our own", Harry stated.

Jeff entered the room as Harry finished his statement. "Can we Dr. Bender, can we?" Jeff pleaded as he entered the room.

"Can you what?"

"Can we adopt the dog - please?"

"If no one comes for the dog, she'll be yours", the doctor smiled at Jeff, "but don't be upset if someone shows before the waiting period is over."

"How long is the waiting period?" Jeff asked.

"Five days. Do you think you can wait that long?" Dr. Bender asked.

"I hope so," Jeff replied.

"Thanks, Harry," Jeff stated as he walked over to shake his hand.

"You're welcome."

Barbara smiled at the two of them and was happy to see the two of them together.

"Well, we'd better be on our way, don't you think?" Barbara asked.

"Could I stay a little longer? I can help out around here, you know clean something, or even water and feed the animals?" Jeff stared at the doctor with pleading eyes.

"If the doctor says its okay."

"It's fine with me," the doctor answered.

"Okay, thanks Ted. Give me a call when you want to get rid of this rascal," Harry stated as he ruffled Jeff's hair before turning to leave.

"Hey, been fishing lately?" Ted asked.

"No, I haven't had too much time lately."

"Well, make time. What do you say, we hit the creek out back tomorrow? We've got some really nice fish to be caught out there," Dr. Bender stated.

"Sounds good. How about you Jeff? Would you like to join us?" Harry asked.

"I don't know how to fly fish. But I would like to watch."

"Don't worry Jeff, your step-dad is one of the best fly fishers I know. Who do you think taught me how?" Dr Bender stated.

That news surprised Jeff. The look upon his face made them all chuckle.

"Hey, I'm not just good looks and brains, Jeff." Harry stated as he smiled at his step-son.

"Come on darling, it's time to mosey on down the road," Harry stated as he swaggered out the door with his wife at his side.

Barbara looked over her shoulder and winked at Jeff. Still smiling she gave her good-byes and joined her husband for the drive home.

The days that followed were unusually warm. Harry, Jeff and Ted would be found at the stream behind the animal clinic. He waived to the other two as he waded to the shore.

"I'll be right back, don't you dare catch anything before I return." Dr. Bender yelled to his fishing buddies, patted the odd looking dog sitting beside Jeff on the bank as he started towards the clinic.

As he followed the path to the back of the clinic, he noticed a ramshackle old truck sitting in the drive. Then spotted the tall elderly looking man. He appeared to be a farmer still dressed in his work clothes. Bent over his cane, he watched the doctor approach.

"Howdy, I hear you have a stray dog here. I lost my dog about four days ago and was told you had one here. She's an odd looking thing. One blue eye and one brown. She's one of the best coon hunters around. She wandered off t'other night," the old man stated.

"Well I have a dog of that description. I'll bring you to her", Dr. Bender replied. With a heavy heart he turned and started to walk down the path to bring the stray's owner to her.

To Be Continued...

David is a student in the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education in Portland, Maine

Rafting Fun

David J. Serrano

One of the most exciting things I have done was when I was about twelve years old. My cousin, Nelson, and I were fooling around down by the Lehigh river during a flood. The weather was getting warm and the snow was melting from the surrounding mountains. We lived in a valley surrounded by three or four mountain chains, and every year during the thaw, the rivers would flood.

Well, the both of us thought it would be fun to raft across the river on this very large piece of Styrofoam that we found on Adam's Island. Our raft used to be part of a floating dock. Along with some long, wide, broken boards and a little hesitation, we set out on the flooded water. We paddled as hard as we could, going straight across the river, only to be pulled downriver ten or twenty feet for every foot that we went across. The water just kept getting faster and faster, and we were getting more and more tired as the time went by. When we were almost to the other side, I lost my paddle, and that's when we both dove in and swam for it.

We got out of the wild water and just lay in the mud of its banks for a while. Getting up and looking around we realized that for a river of about fifty feet across, we traveled a few miles downstream to the other end of town. We had a slow walk of about two to three hours, just to get back to our own neighborhood.

Soaking wet and freezing cold, we still had one hell of a good time.

Barber Foods

Evelyn Rice

My name is Evelyn Rice. I am an associate here at Barber Foods. I thought that I would like to write about my experiences working at this company.

I came to work here for the first time about eighteen years ago. I started on the second shift as a boner. We were trained to bone out chicken breasts only, but they did have other areas in the plant such as weighing areas, pack-out, and a very small specialty area in which we might also be placed to work. Actually, what we did for specialty at that time was done on tables in the boning area. After the products we were working on were done, they were placed on trays and then on racks. They had what they called a blast freezer, and were placed in there until frozen and then hand-wrapped to be packed and sent to customers. We seemed to have a lot of fun, even though we were working. I can remember when we used to work on Saturdays, and it was nothing to see Mr. Barber, Fred Buzen or one of the boys, Stephan or David Barber, standing next to us and working the same as we were. The boys always worked at the plant for their father when they had breaks from school, and both stayed with the company after finishing college. They still seem the same to me, but I also realize what a great asset they have been for the company and the people who work for them.

I continued to work for about two years before I moved away. I really enjoyed my job, but my husband wanted to move, so I had to leave. As it turned out, I was gone for only one year. When I returned, I came back to Barber Foods to see some of my friends, and they asked me if I was coming back to work. I said that I didn't think that I could because I had left without a good cause. Well, I did get my job back, and after six months, I was offered a supervisor position for the speciality department, which I accepted. I kept this job for the next two years until they offered me another position with Quality Control on the first shift, which I also accepted. Things were really going good for me at this time. I had a really good job which I enjoyed. I also had four beautiful children that I loved more than anything and a husband that I thought was the best. I was able to keep this job for the next six years. During those years, I never once thought of leaving my job. To me this company was like a second family. Then something that I was not expecting to happen in my life took place, and no matter how hard I tried, I could not clear my mind enough to make any of the right decisions, so I asked for a leave of absence from work. Being the kind of company that they are and also having concern for the people who worked for them, they let me have my leave. I took this time to try and get my life back together and returned back to work after about six weeks. Much to my disappointment, as well as the company's, I just never was able to perform my job the way I had been and decided that another move would be the best thing for me at this time.

I moved to North Carolina and lived there for about seven years. I guess the one thing I learned from doing this is that you can never run away from your past. I came home to visit from time to time, and sometimes I would still come back and visit my friends at Barber Foods. They always seemed glad to see me no matter how much time had passed. Each time I visited the plant, I was told about all the expansions

that were taking place and was asked if I wanted to come back to work. In 1993 my mother was quite sick so I moved closer for her. She moved in with my sister, and I knew she would be all right there, so I decided I could go back to work. I really don't think I was being honest with myself because I was really afraid of coming back here and asking for a job as a dish washer in the restaurant in Machias, Maine. I kept this job for a year, and all the time I was thinking how hard the job was for the amount of money I was making and knew I could be doing better if I wanted.

I came to Portland to visit my daughter and decided I would like to try and come back to Barber Foods. So after nine years away from the company, I got up my nerve to call my old boss who was Zareh and ask if they would be interested in hiring me one more time. Zareh told me I should talk to Peter Bickford and see if they were doing any hiring at this time. I talked to Peter, and he said they could send me an application, and when I was ready to move here, just call and they would have me come in for an interview. Well, I did come in, and they hired me back once again and set me up for a physical. The day I came in for my physical I was a little nervous at first, but when I saw all the people I had to worked with before, and especially Stephan Barber who stepped out of a meeting to speak to me, they made me realize I was once again back where I belonged. Even though I have had some difficulty in adjusting to the line that I am doing, I am glad to be back here working.

I would like to say that even though the plant has expanded from about one hundred and fifty people when I was here before to about seven hundred today, the people who run it are still the same. They still care about the associates and will help the in anyway they can. If it were not for Barber Foods, I would not be writing this or taking the computer writing course that they offer.

I would like to give special thanks to Mr. Barber, his family, and also Zareh. Thanks for giving me the opportunities with the Worksmart Education Program.

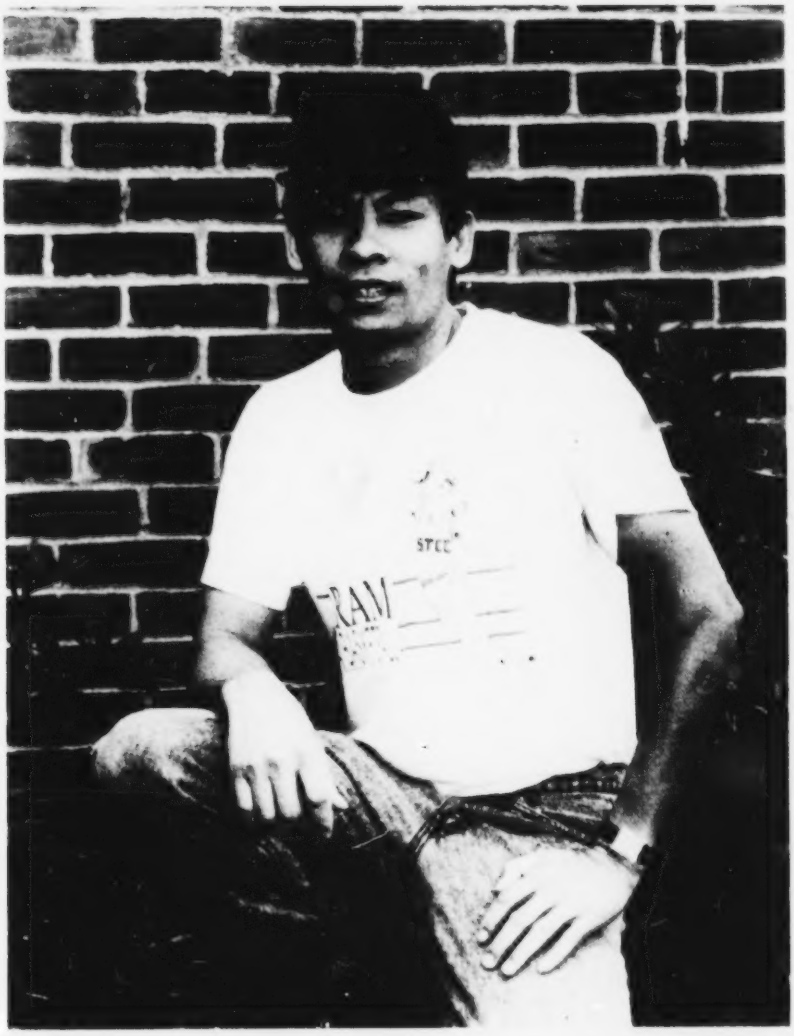
My Scariest Moment

Leonor Huninghake

When I was 19 years old in 1991 I was pregnant. At that time I was in my country. I was so scared when I gave birth to my baby because my husband was not with me. Just my mom and my brother were with me that time and I was scared because I didn't have enough money to pay my bills in the hospital. After two days I felt desperate and scared so I asked the nurse, "where's my baby? what happened to him?" The nurse told me my baby was sick and premature.

After one day my baby died. I cried really hard and I felt I wanted to die too. my mom said "It's okay." She told me the baby was not mine but God's baby. It was good that I had a lot of friends. They helped me to recover. After one year I felt okay. I was totally recovered and I had been busy buying and selling vegetables.

I am Leonor Huninghake. I have been working here in Barber Foods for 1 year and 3 months. I like working here because I know this is the good place to work. And especially, I have a chance to go to school and get a chance to have a better future if I will finish this course. I came from the Philippines (my country) in March, 1994. So far I enjoy being here in the USA. This is a great country.



Hi, my name is Navan Leng. I'm from Cambodia. I'm 31 years old. I'm married and we're having a baby next January, 1997. We live in Portland, Maine. Now, I'm a machine operator at American Tool Company and I love my job.

A Car Accident

Navan Leng

In 1994 I was a taxi driver. I worked for Capital Taxi in Lowell, Mass.

On April 4, 1994 I woke up early in the morning and went to work. When I arrived, I got into my taxi and started it up. It was about time to go; I got a phone call from my dispatcher. It was my first job of the day. My dispatcher told me to pick up my customers at their house and bring them to where they worked. After I finished that, I drove my taxi around town.

A little later it was about 9:30 a.m.; I got another call. It was a new customer. This time my dispatcher gave me the job because he knew that I was closer to it than the other taxis. It was the beginning of a very bad situation. When I got to the customers' house , they told me to take them to Shop'n Save. I got another call from the office which told me to pick someone up from WIC, a place that helps people who have children etc., and to bring them to Shop'n Save, too.

Now we were all ready to go to Shop'n Save. Not far away from WIC there was a gas station. Immediately I looked at my car. It was almost out of gas. Because of this, I decided first to fill it up before I dropped my customers at the store because I was afraid of running out. As I approached the gas station, the accident would be coming from behind. This place was so busy because it was connected to a road near the gas station. I saw a big tractor trailer stopped at the corner of the road near the gas station. First, I stayed behind it for a moment because I thought maybe it was waiting for traffic to get out. I waited for a while and the tractor trailer didn't move. Next, I decided to move my taxi ahead beside it and wait for a pump to become available. When I got next to it, I looked at the tractor driver. I didn't see anybody there. As I was stopping my taxi I looked again for a pump which was available to me. My customers were talking to each other.

I waited and waited for some gas for my taxi, but I didn't get it. I was stopped next to the tractor because I left some space for some cars to get in and out.

Suddenly, at the same time while I was waiting for a pump, I saw the tractor body come over my taxi roof! I felt faint when I saw that and my eyes were wide open, but I couldn't do anything about it. The people in the car were screaming. It happened so fast. My taxi was hit by the tractor on the right side and was dragged about twenty to thirty feet. I didn't see that guy jump into the tractor and move it. He hadn't looked around first before he had moved it.

After the accident, I didn't move my car and no one got out, but that guy moved his trailer because it blocked all of the road. Somebody saw the accident and called the police. They came with two ambulances. A policeman came to me and asked, " What direction did I come from?" I told him that I had stopped my taxi next to the tractor, and then he walked away. He didn't come back to ask me any more questions. At this moment I couldn't explain very well to him about how the accident happened because it scared me so. He said I didn't speak English and he thought I had come from another road and tried to pass the tractor. All of the policemen went to talk to the other driver. They asked him a lot of questions in

English, and this driver spoke good English because he was American. He could tell the policemen whatever he wanted.

After the policeman had left me, some people from the ambulances came and asked us if someone got hurt. I told them that my neck was hurt a little bit and people in my taxi were hurt, too. They took the people in my taxi and me to the hospital. My boss drove the taxi back when he saw me get into the ambulance. When I got to the hospital, the policeman arrived after me. He asked for my I.D. and he said the accident was my fault. I couldn't argue with him because I was strapped to a bed.

I don't know why my boss didn't get a lawyer and nobody asked me more about the accident. As a person new to this country, I didn't feel I was given a fair chance to explain what happened. Even now I don't want to hear any more about this accident. I didn't lose my job. I returned to work a few days afterwards, and everyone in the accident is now fine.

Afterword

Dear Writers,

As the photographer for *Writers at Work* and as an aide in an ESL classroom I am very privileged. I have met the people in these photos. That experience has been incredible. Each interchange has brought new and unbelievable richness to my life.

There is one word in particular that comes to mind when I think of the people on these pages: risk. Every single person in this publication has taken risks. They are all brave and exceptional people. Maybe the risk involved journeying on a boat to Thailand, maybe it involved taking one's first writing course or entering a classroom for the first time in years. Certainly it involved consenting to have work published and one's picture taken by a stranger.

Every time I photograph someone for *Writers at Work* I feel I have met a new friend. I feel the world is not as small as we may believe. I recognize a universal spirit in all of us. We may come from different countries and speak different languages, but we have more in common than we think. We all have something special to share. I am grateful to the people in this magazine because they accepted the risk to share themselves with us.

Chessell McGee

My name is Chessell McGee. I am from Maine. I have lived in Portland off and on for the last twelve years. I have been a member of the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education for two years now. I would like to thank all of the learners who have helped make the Partnership a success.

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221

221